

Of Blood and Chaos

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Of Blood and Chaos

by [HobblyWobbly](#)

Summary

*"Oh I told you, I only speak with violence
So look me in the eyes if you dare
You'll learn a lesson right then and there"*
He wanted a home.

*"Chaos is my lover
Power is my best friend
You're all my marionettes"*
He wanted his family to be happy.

A retelling of the Dream SMP through the eyes of the Blood God and the God of Chaos

Notes

This is all set around Dream SMP and events before it with my own twist! This is all based on the CHARACTERS not the actual real life people.

Song is [Violence](#) & [Marionettes](#) by Kanaya. Go check them out they're absolutely amazing!!!!

Blood

Chapter Summary

“Techno? What are you doing?” Techno didn’t see Wilbur from his angle but he could hear the boy’s worried voice. Soon enough, small hands were grasping his hands, clutching them tightly, a yellow sweater stepping into his vision.

“Stay,” *Don’t leave me alone.* Techno swallows, his voice shaking, hating how weak he sounded. Wilbur was quiet. Just when Techno thought he’d be kicked back through the portal, his hands were given a soft squeeze.

“Okay.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Techno remembers the day he first heard the voices.

He remembers the way his gut curled in disgust at the bitter scent of blood, the stark, lifeless white eyes of his parents, the proud squeals of the piglins as they celebrated their latest kill, the lava pit that bubbled and popped after them.

killthembloodforthebloodgodkillthemyouknowyouwantto

KĀLĪJĀTHĒMĀKĪLĀTHĒM MURĪDĒRĪHĒM DŌNTĪĒTĪHĒMĠĒĀWĀXĪ

All it took was a push.

Techno remembers watching their bodies crash into the lava and burn away. Their screams echoing off the Nether rack walls and brimstone. The blood of his parents smeared across his hands and snout. Watching the piglins sink into the lava until there was nothing left.

Those were the only memories of his parents that he held. Perhaps some sort of divine mercy was placed upon him. If he remembered hugs, warmth, and tenderness then he never would have survived in the Nether for as long as he has. It was a kill or be killed world down there. Only the strong survived, scavenging for what little food could be found, claiming and battling over territory, attacking adventurers who had happened to steal their gold. He did not look for love, he did not expect it to look for him, he barely knew what it was.

There was no room for sentimentality in his life.

Bloodbloodforthebloodgodkillslaughter

BĒLŌŌDĒFŌRĪHĒM BĒLŌŌDĒĠŌDĒ

Techno knew he was different.

While the other piglets his age had their tusks growing in, his were still short and blunt, making it

harder for him to eat the tough meat and fungi that populated the Nether. Their adult counterparts, however, showed the most difference. Techno would stare into their eyes and they would never stare back. Unblinking. Lifeless. He almost believed them to be blind if not for all the signs pointing otherwise. The few remaining wisps of hair moved in the hot breeze and their shirts billowed- the rest of them utterly still. Their only motive in life to continue searching for more gold. There was no soul- just a body.

Born as what many would label a ‘runt,’ Techno was smaller but faster than the other piglets, able to scale Nether rack cliffs in half the time it would take anyone else and escape the mobs without breaking a sweat. Despite his small stature, however, he had the strength of a brute; he could flip a charging hoglin onto its back and still continue fighting the piglins that made the poor choice of entering his territory. He had survived long enough on his own in the cruelty of the world to put fear behind his name

Technoblade.

It was the name the voices gave him. They were the closest he had to family, really. There with him every waking- and sleeping- moment, filling him with knowledge the other piglins could never understand. But there was always something missing. There would be days when Techno watched those from the Overworld venture through portals. He watched them journey across the Nether, laughing with their companions, breaking bread together, and fighting mobs together.

lonelylonelyneednoneonlyblood

need blood as a piglin BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

Techno had tried befriending adventurers at first, but they would always attack or run at the sight of him. His fellow piglins were too single-minded, only caring about their gold and food and territory, incapable of learning speech or half the things he saw the travelers do and he could do. He’d spend most days sitting alongside the portals built of strange black rock, wondering if he was to live here for eternity, trapped in a meaningless existence.

Then he met Wilbur.

It had been a rather normal day so far; he ate fungus stew, chased some hoglins out of his territory, and watched a ghastr terrorize an adventurer until they fell into a pit of lava and died. Overall, uneventful. Techno was sitting on a cliff, watching a strider waddle past him over the sea below, when he heard a shrill shriek not too far away, his ear perking up at the sound. It sounded like an Overworlder, but the pitch was too high for a grown one. Curiosity piked, Techno grabbed his golden sword and headed in the direction of the scream.

“Get- get away from me!” A boy nearly half Techno’s height was backed up against a wall, much leaner than Techno with a bird’s nest of brown hair that fell over his right eye, a pair of circular glasses sitting atop his nose, and a woolen yellow sweater swamping his small body to match his yellow eyes. Opposite of him was a pair of starving piglins that were stumbling closer and closer with every second, flesh hugging their bones, foam dripping from their gaping jaws. He was smaller than Techno, there was no chance he would survive against the ravenous piglins.

leavehimtodielet him bleed

kill them and kill me too

Techno tightened his grip on the sword. He knew the voices were right. He shouldn’t get involved. He had no reason to. They weren’t on his territory, and it was the kid’s own fault for coming down

here. So why was he charging down the cliff and placing himself between the Overworlder and the piglins? Why was he blocking an attack and slicing off the tusk of the largest one, snarling at them until they turned tail and ran?

shouldhavekilledshedbloodescapedescapedran

YESKILLMÖREMEMÖREBLOOD

Anger boiled deep in his head, as hot as the lava that surrounded them. The voices roared into his ears. They churned within, hungry for destruction, and he knew it was too much for him to handle. Red began creeping into his vision.

“Um...thank you...” A shaky voice from behind Techno snapped him free, sweat dripping down his neck into his tunic. He turns. The boy was smiling the best he could despite the fear still lingering in his eyes, shifting his weight from foot to foot, knife clutched to his chest. “I didn’t- I thought I was a goner! Can...can you understand me?”

“...yes.” Techno didn’t know why he was talking to this boy. Maybe it was the loneliness. Maybe it was to escape the voices creeping up in the recesses of his mind. The boy, however, perked up when Techno responded, undaunted by the gruffness of his voice.

“I didn’t know piglin’s could talk...” He blinked then held his hand out. Techno stared at it, then leaned in close, pressing his snout against the palm and sniffing it. Wilbur giggled. “H- Hey, that tickles! I’m- I’m Wilbur.”

“Technoblade.”

“Woah, that’s such a cool name. A lot cooler than ‘Wilbur,’ ” Wilbur does this weird thing with his voice while making air quotes in the air. “Um, well, I should be getting home now. It was nice meeting you, Technoblade.” He dropped his hand and started walking in a random direction. He paused, looked around the area, and turned back to Techno. “Um. I’m lost.”

Techno’s ear flicked in annoyance.

“Follow me...” He grumbled, shoving his gold sword into the boy’s open hands, not waiting to see if Wilbur was following or not as he headed in a direction. The telltale sound of running footsteps from behind told him how close Wilbur was.

“Thank you, again, but why did you give me your sword?” Wilbur asks and Techno sighs. His ear flicked again.

“Piglin like gold. Leave you alone.” He said as an explanation, climbing up a ledge. Wilbur struggles to follow and Techno wondered how he got so far without dying already.

“Oh. I knew that. You’d like my dad- he beat Herobrine!” Techno had no idea who that was. Wilbur took Techno’s silence as an invitation to continue, the two resuming their walk. “He has *huge* wings and takes me flying sometimes and goes on adventures so that he can make money! We have a farm with cows and sheep and chickens and pigs, but they aren’t like the pigs here. They’re a lot dumber and they just oink a lot. Do you oink?”

“No.”

“That’s what I thought. So, how come you can talk?”

hecantknowaboutushemusTNTonlyyouhiddensafeprotected

~~we taught you we love you~~

“...I learned. On my own.”

“Oh, okay. Well, it’s still pretty cool. Dad said that I was a real shithead about learning how to talk-” Wilbur stopped mid-sentence. “Um, don’t tell my dad that I said that.”

“Said what?”

“Exactly.”

“No, I really don’t know what.”

“It’s better you don’t.”

Techno learned, rather quickly, that Wilbur talked a lot.

He easily talked enough for the both of them, not minding Techno’s silence and clipped responses, telling him more of his life with Phil and how his days would go. Techno wouldn’t admit it out loud, but he enjoyed the company, it was nice having someone to talk with that wasn’t inside his own head.

“So, how old are you?” Wilbur asks eventually as they were building a bridge across a lava pool. Normally, Techno would just jump over them, but Wilbur’s legs were shorter and he wasn’t sure if the boy could make the jump unharmed.

“Um.”

“I’m eight! I’m the oldest kid in the village nearby and I’m proud of that. Dad says that once I’m a little older he’ll let me join him on his adventures.”

“...I’m...older than that.” Techno mumbles. He wasn’t actually sure how old he was or how ages even worked. None of the piglins used them- everything was determined through rank and violence and gold. That was just how the Nether worked.

“Hmm...” Wilbur muses and dances his way across the bridge. Techno grabbed the kid by the back of his collar before he could trip and fall headfirst into the lava. The curly-haired idiot just grinned and laughed, letting himself get dragged along. “We could be twins!”

“...okay,” he didn’t know what that meant, but it didn’t sound half bad. They traveled in silence after that. Occasionally, they would be sidetracked because Wilbur found something interesting or Techno was taking a longer route to avoid hostile piglin bangs, but they eventually found the Nether portal Wilbur came through, marked by a couple rocks he left by the entrance so he’d know.

“Well, thank you for showing me the way!” Wilbur smiles. It didn’t reach his eyes. “I’ll come to visit again soon, I promise. I remember the way we went, so I’ll know where to find you next time!”

“Okay.”

“And maybe next time I’ll bring my dad! He’ll really like to meet you. Oh, and my goldfish. I won him during a festival the village nearby held.”

“Okay.”

“...I’ll be going then,” he takes a step back towards the portal. Techno stays still, resisting the urge to reach out, to follow after the boy. His friend.

lethimgolethimleave

follow/go-go-go-go-go

The voices were finally back, their whispers sending shivers down his spine rather than gentle reassurances, sweat dripping down his neck.

“Bye, Techno,” Wilbur had turned and climbed up onto the obsidian, stepping into the purple window, and then he was gone. Techno didn’t know what came over him then. Maybe it was the loneliness. Maybe it was boredom. Whatever it was, it filled his veins and pushed him forward through the portal and out of the Nether.

Nothing could have prepared Techno for what greeted him.

When Techno first felt grass upon his hooves he nearly jumped out of his skin, climbing back up onto the Nether portal away from the foreign plant. The sun above was blinding, eyes tearing up under the harsh light, so he ducked his head and used his arms as a shield, the little bit of shade it provided helping his eyes adjust somewhat.

“W-Wilbur-” He called.

“Techno? What are you doing?” Techno didn’t see Wilbur from his angle but he could hear the boy’s worried voice. Soon enough, small hands were grasping his hands, clutching them tightly, a yellow sweater stepping into his vision.

“Stay,” *Don’t leave me alone.* Techno swallows, his voice shaking, hating how weak he sounded. Wilbur was quiet. Just when Techno thought he’d be kicked back through the portal, his hands were given a soft squeeze.

“Okay,” Wilbur said gently. “Come on, home isn’t too far away.” Techno eventually had to be coaxed off, Wilbur reassuringly holding his hands all the way, hesitantly touching the ground once again until both legs were level. The meadow around them meandering in the wind, long stalks of grass flowing as the lava would, a couple cows nearby munching on grass unperturbed by the two’s presence. “You okay?”

“Yeah.” He eventually forces out, still taking in everything, an arm crossed over his eyes which were still adjusting. Wilbur tugs on Techno’s hand, the two boys crossing through the meadow away from the portal until it falls out of sight.

The cottage Wilbur lived in was rather ordinary, built out of logs in an oak forest, surrounded by bountiful farmland and animals, and lit up by torches so that no mobs would spawn in the territory, a river coursing through nearby meaning an endless supply of water. Techno thought it was the most beautiful place he’d ever been

“Dad! I’m home!” Wilbur calls into the house, squeezing Techno’s hand reassuringly. The pigman hid behind the boy’s back, making himself smaller. “Here, brush your hooves off on the mat like this to get the mud off. Dad doesn’t like it when I get the house dirty.” Techno was busy copying Wilbur and kicking the mud off onto a mat when there was a crash followed by rushed footsteps.

“Wilbur! Thank heavens- where have you been?! I looked for you all over the village and the forest and- are your clothes singed?!” A blonde man with large black wings came hurrying down

the hall, dropping to his knees and scooping Wilbur's face into his hands, looking him over his injuries. "Did you go into the Nether ?!"

"You said we were out of blaze powder! And I'm eight now, so that means I can go on adventures! Besides, I found a friend!" Techno didn't move from his spot behind Wilbur. "Techno, that was your cue. He's a little shy, dad, but don't worry he's very nice and he has a really cool name and I think he's my long lost twin brother or something and-"

"Wilbur..." Phil sighs tiredly, placing his hands on his son's shoulders. "Slow down. Are you hurt?"

"No, I'm not, and you would *know* that if you let me finish!" Wilbur huffs, squeezing Techno's hand again. Reluctantly, Techno shuffled into view, head ducked, toeing the floorboards with his hoof. "Dad, this is Technoblade. He saved me!" Phil turns his gaze away from Wilbur and his eyes widen. "He doesn't have a home, and it would be rude to make him go back without even a meal first."

He looked back towards his son and, oh, Wil was good. He was laying on the puppy dog eyes thick, his bottom lip jutted out and trembling, wrapping his arms around Techno and hugging him tightly. "*He's my twin brother...please, dad...*" Before Techno knew what was happening, a pair of hands were gripping his face, squishing his cheeks together making him squeal in surprise. "*And he's adorable.*"

Phil sighs again. Just when Techno thought he'd get sent away, the winged man gave him a soft smile, standing from his spot on the floor.

"Well, Techno, would you like to stay for dinner?"

nonononono

~~YĒS YĒS YĒS YĒS YĒS~~

"...Yes."

After dinner, Phil began setting up the couch for Techno.

"This isn't the most comfortable, but I'll work on getting a bed for you in the morning. Wilbur's room is large enough for both of you." Phil said. He was saying some more things, but Techno was caught up in his head. The voices had been silent all evening and while he was grateful he was also scared. Were they angry at him? Should he have stayed in the Nether ? What if they change their minds and kick him out? What if Wilbur gets tired of him and starts hating him-

"Hey, buddy," Techno's ears twitch and he looks up. Phil had stepped over with a look of concern on his face. Wilbur and Phil both had a crease between their brows when they were worried. He began shuffling awkwardly. "It's alright, come here." Silently, Techno shuffles over, bringing himself close enough to Phil so he could clutch at his shirt, pressing his snout against his stomach. A hand falls down and pets through Techno's pink hair, occasionally brushing over his ear.

"...dad?" Wilbur pipes up, voice much softer than it had been before, popping up at Phil's opposite side. "Is he okay?" Techno makes a little squeaking noise against Phil. He felt a small hand grasp his own, squeezing. He squeezed back.

"Yeah, he's alright. Just adjusting." Phil mumbles. He wraps his free arm around Wilbur and pulls him into his hip, holding the two close. "Just a lot of new things at once. Remember when we moved?" Wilbur nods. "It's a lot like that. We'll be alright."

“Alright..” Techno repeats quietly.

“You know what, how about we all sleep in my bed for tonight?” And so the three ended up in Phil’s bed, both tucked into his side, listening as he told a story of his youth. Techno fell asleep that night surrounded in warmth, feeling the happiest he’d ever been.

“Hey, Techno?” Wilbur asks. If Techno didn’t have sensitive hearing his brother’s hushed voice would’ve been missed. He shuffles around in bed, debating whether or not to reply, sitting up with a yawn, spying the boy also sitting up and staring out the window.

“Yeah?”

“I wanna be a king someday.”

“Why?”

Wilbur smiles at him. He looks years older, at that moment, than he truly was. The flame of passion burned in his golden eyes, the moonlight framing him like he was an angel, hands gesturing about. “It seems fun. You get to do whatever you want, say whatever you want, build whatever you want, and all kinds of other things! And a whole bunch of people will look up to you! It would be amazing...we could have a whole nation to ourselves.”

“...”

badbadnotgoodwontbegood

Ruleoverthemallwithanironfist

“If I become king, will you be there with me?”

saynosaynosaynosayno

Killeveryonewhostandsinyourway

“Of course, Wilbur.”

Techno was eleven when he first shapeshifted.

He remembers waking up in bed as he normally did and shuffling into the bathroom. The familiar sound of Phil preparing breakfast echoed upstairs and the smell of fresh eggs and hashbrowns came following not long after. He didn’t realize it, at first, brain working out of sleep mode, but when Techno finished brushing his teeth and looked up in the mirror, the reflection that greeted him back wasn’t his own.

“DAD?!”

Panicked footsteps came rushing up the stairs, the bathroom door being slammed open, Phil quickly entering with a sword in hand.

“Techno? What’s wrong-” once he saw his son standing over the faucet, he stopped, eyes going wide in shock. “...Wilbur?”

“N-No, dad, i-it’s me. I just. I woke up this way I...” Techno ran his hands over his face, both marveling and terrified of the unfamiliar features he felt. He looked nearly identical to his brother.

Oddly enough, his ears were still pointed near the tips, his hair was still abnormally bright pink, and he still had a curly tail.

“Dad? Techno? What’s wrong I heard a scream- Woah!” Wilbur’s head came peeking around Phil’s still form in the doorway, slipping past so he could reach Techno, grasping his hands. “That’s so cool! You look just like me! I told you we were twins! This is so awesome!”

While the two marveled over Techno’s new talent, helping shift between pigman and human, Phil dropped his head in his hands, wondering what he had gotten himself into.

Techno takes up sparring in his teens.

He found that, as he grows older, there is too much energy in his veins that his daily chores aren’t enough. It was Phil’s idea, having spotted Techno using a branch as a sword against a tree, seeing how his moves were slow and sloppy from inexperience, but the technique was there and behind each swing came natural strength.

“You remind me of when I was younger,” Phil said good-naturedly, handing over a neatly wrapped box. “I became an adventurer so I could help my parents, but I always loved fighting. I grew out of it, eventually, but it was good for me. I think it might be good for you too.”

Inside the box was an iron sword. The handle of the sword was bound with leather, the hilt decorated yet minimal enough that it didn’t take away from its beauty, and the blade was at least the length of his entire arm. Techno weighed the sword in his right hand, slashing delicately at the air with a novice-like apprehension, and as he did so the reflection of the fireplace flames danced warmly within the cool steel.

“Dad, how much did this-”

“That doesn’t matter. Let’s go test this out, huh? There’s a new training dummy in the backyard. I don’t want you mutilating any more trees.” Techno leaped over the table and tackled his father in a hug, burying his face against his neck, mumbling a soft thanks. Phil laughs and wraps Techno up in his wings, the feathers a familiar safety net.

And so, every day after his daily chores, Techno trained in the backyard. Occasionally Wilbur would come and watch, sitting on a log nearby reading a book out loud for him or practicing his newest song, and sometimes Phil would watch from the porch, coming over to give Techno tips or show him new moves. Most of the time, though, it was just Techno. From sunrise to sunset Techno was out there, feeling his body grow stronger as the weeks went on, rushing into his soul keeping the flame healthy and bright. His new hobby, however, came with a price.

The voices grew louder.

With each swing, Techno could feel their power over him grow, their whispers becoming full-blown shouts in his ears until they were ringing, hands gripping his arms increasing the strength of his swings.

youcankilleveryone

no one stands for you

Thwack.

theydontstandachanceagainstyou

~~so much blood could be spill-~~

Thwack.

~~you can destroy them all and rule over their lands~~

~~it could all be ours-~~

Thwack.

~~their blood will flow through the rivers and you will conquer them all-~~

~~BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD~~

Crack.

The training dummy lays on the grass having been broken off his stick. Techno stands over it panting hard, sweating dripping down his back, blood pumping in his ears. It was all just so damn loud-

“Wow. You really didn’t give the dummy a chance, huh?” A voice- an *outside* voice- whistles from the treeline. Sword in hand, Techno wheels on the stranger, but finds nothing out of the ordinary. The trees sway in the wind.

Techno scans the area, keeping an eye for any sudden movements, anything that could hint towards their position. He refused to let anyone get near his home. “Where the hell are you? How long have you been here?”

“Uh, around the time when you cut off the dummy’s head.” They said thoughtfully. Techno squints. “And I’m not telling you where I am.”

“Why?”

“Because then it’ll be my head rolling on the ground.” Based on their voice alone, Techno guessed they were male. The villagers didn’t speak the language as they, and any adventurers passing by never made it to their cottage, sticking near the main roads where mobs rarely ventured.

“What’s your name?”

Creation

Chaos

“Dream, actually. I haven’t gone by that in many decades.” Techno’s blood ran cold.

“You...can hear them..?”

“It’s more of a whisper, really. Nothing too terribly coherent or as clear as you. It’s good to know I’m not alone, then,” the grin in the bastard’s smug voice was clear as day. “I have spent a long time searching for someone else like me. Never thought I’d find you here.”

“You can *hear* them.” Techno snapped. “How! Why can’t the others?!”

The disembodied voice whined dramatically. “Ah, too many questions.”

“ANSWER ME!” With as much force as he could, Techno threw his sword. The moment it made

contact with his target the birds were sent flying from their nests, silence falling over the forest. Techno waited. After a couple of minutes, there were footsteps and, soon, a teen stepped out from the treeline, carrying Techno's sword, his shoulder sliced and bleeding. He wore a mask with a smiley face scribbled across it, hiding his face from view. He didn't seem much older than Techno, skinny and lean like Wilbur, dirty blonde hair pulled into a ponytail.

"Impressive. I thought I kept my voice level enough so you couldn't pinpoint where I was."

"Not level enough, apparently. Now, answer my question."

"It's too soon," Dream, the bastard, stabbed the sword into the grass, leaning against it like he would a cane. "You're too young."

"What does that mean? Why are you here then? Why bother me now?"

"I didn't mean to. You would have noticed me eventually. Or, well, not *you* per se," he waves his hand about. "The 'voices' as you call them." There were so many questions burning on the forefront of Techno's mind, but any moment now Wilbur or Phil would come looking for him. He didn't want to know what Dream would do to them. "I was here for a friend, actually."

"What? No one else lives here except my family and I." Did Phil know this lunatic? There was no way Wilbur did, and Techno knew their father had encountered many strange people along with his adventures.

"Hmm, I guess that's true," Dream hums, tapping a finger against the mouth of his mask, head tilted upwards in thought. "Oh well. I gave it a shot. I'll be going, then."

"Wait-" Techno stepped forward. Dream stance immediately becomes defensive, coiled, and prepared for an attack. "I'm not gonna fight you, you idiot." Dream relaxes and gestures for him to continue. "I just... I have a question."

"...well, ask away."

"What..." What should he ask? There were so many questions he couldn't figure out which took more importance. "What am I?"

"Why," Dream suddenly seemed much taller, his mask's smile a lot wider, half bowing with his hands waving outwards. "You're the Blood God's vassal."

Underneath Techno's foot, the stairs creaked and he cursed.

"Techno, is that you?" Phil's tired voice rang from down the hall. Techno half debated climbing back up into bed and pretending he never came down in the first place.

"...yeah."

"I'm in the kitchen." With a sigh, Techno climbs the rest of the stairs and heads into the kitchen. Phil was leaning against the counter sipping a cup of tea when Techno entered. The bags under his eyes seemed much more prominent than usual and his wings were pulled close to his back. "You alright, mate?"

"Yeah. You?" He takes a seat by the island. Phil passes him another cup of tea which Techno murmurs his thanks into.

“Eh, you know me. Just old man things.” Everything about him was calm and collected, but Techno could see himself unraveling at the seams. “Nothing I can’t handle. Will you know you’re up?”

Techno snorts. “He can sleep through anything.” He pauses. “I didn’t...want to bother anyone.” There’s a shuffle of clothes and the skid of a stool being moved to his left. With a soft oomph, Phil takes his seat beside Techno, wing comfortingly wrapping around the teen.

“Want to talk about it?” It was a simple question with so much meaning behind it. Phil had a way of doing that. Techno stares into his cup, his reflection staring back in the brown liquid, a couple bags of his own beginning to form under his eyes.

“...I met someone.”

“Oh. Is it a girl..?”

youareoursandoursalone

no-one/could/take-you-from-us

“What- no. It’s...” Techno buried his face in his hands. “It’s a long story. Complicated.”

“Well, it’s a good thing we have all night.” A gentle hand places itself against his back, rubbing against the tense muscles. Techno breathes heavily. Slowly, he begins explaining everything; the voices, his life in the Nether, how he survived, how he *killed*, the nightmares he had, what the voices whispered to him, what Dream told him that day, how he couldn’t get it out of his mind. “What- what if he’s right? He...I know I shouldn’t believe him, but there was just...I felt like I *knew* him. As if I’d grown up with him and I didn’t. I’d never met him before in my life.”

Phil sits forward, hands folded atop the table, index fingers pressed against his lips, eyes closed in thought. Once Techno was done talking, he resumed staring into the tea that had now gone cold, a thin circle of milk swirling around the center.

“There...is a sickness. At least, that’s what we can call it up here. Sometimes when people venture into the Nether they don’t return the same way as they left. It starts with just voices. Whispers. In a week, they become a savage beast, wanting nothing more than to kill anything that comes into their sight, everything that made them the person they were before now lost and forgotten. A couple mates of mine got inflicted with it. I watched them.” Phil’s voice is level, but he doesn’t talk any louder than a whisper.

“Dad...am I...”

“No. It would have changed you already if that was the case. If what that person told you is true then you’re safe...but I don’t know for how long.”

“What does that mean?”

“I don’t know. Just calling it a feeling. Dads get those sorts of things.”

“...what should I do?”

Phil doesn’t respond immediately. He reaches an arm over and gently pulls Techno into a hug, holding him close. “We’ll figure this out, son,” he brings his hand up to brush affectionately through Techno’s hair. And if he hears soft sobs come from the pigman, shoulders shuddering, squeaking occasionally against his control, he doesn’t mention it. “We’ll work through this. We’ll be alright.”

“You said that before...when I first came here...”

“And I was right, wasn't I?”

“Yeah... we'll be alright...”

For a long time, it was just the three of them. It had just been them, side by side, taking whatever the world threw at them.

And then, it wasn't anymore.

“Techno, Wilbur, I want you to meet someone,” Phil said one stormy night, having left home on a mining foray since they were running out of spare ores. Wilbur was tossed across the couch, long limbs going everywhere, lazily strumming his guitar as he toyed with his newest song. Techno sat on the corner of the couch like a normal person reading the *Art of War*, a book Phil bought him for his fifteenth birthday, Wilbur's foot resting on his shoulder, having long since given up on pushing it away, pink hair tied up in a messy bun.

“The last time you said that you were drunk and kept calling a fridge our mom.” Wilbur chimes. Techno snickers, turning another page. “You even tried convincing me that she was my real mom.”

“I *thought* I told you both never to bring them up again,” Phil said sternly, having stepped into the living room, shaking the rain out of his wings, ringing water out of his hat.

“Come on, dad, you know it's all in good fun.” He tilts his head back over the armrest to direct an innocent smile towards his dad. Phil gives an unimpressed look in return. “Who did you want us to meet?”

“Right. Come on, mate. No need to be shy.”

“Fuck you. 'M not shy.” A squeaky voice grumbled. Techno abruptly stopped reading his book. Wilbur strung a bad note, nearly launching himself on top of Techno in his attempt at sitting up. Peeking out from around Phil's leg was a boy no older than seven. His hair was a soaked mop of blond strands, framing his eyes which were yellow and blue, heat practically radiating off him, his ears pointed and cupped that almost resembled Techno's. Both Techno and Wilbur were speechless, simply staring towards the child that was glaring right back at them, clutching onto Phil's pants in small hands.

“...dad.” Wilbur breaks the silence. He was giving the two his full attention now. “You can't be serious.”

“Is he a slime?” Techno asks, watching a droplet of goop slip off the boy's chin that he quickly scrubbed away.

“I think a magma cube, actually. I found him seeking shelter during the storm. Turns out the little guy doesn't have any family and, well,” Phil shrugs letting the silence finish his sentence.

“*Dad.*” Techno groans, setting his sword aside, burying his face in his hands.

“What would you rather have me do? Leave him out there? In the pouring rain and cold? Alone? The poor thing doesn't have *shoes*. This will be the last orphan I take in, I swear.” Techno glances down and, indeed, he didn't have any shoes, dirty socked feet tracking mud onto the floors.

“The outside fucking sucks.” The kid piped up then went back to hiding behind Phil.

“Where is he gonna sleep?” Wilbur brings up reasonably, eyeing the situation with apprehension. Techno just grumbles some more, unsure of how he felt about everything that's happening. He liked it being just the three of them.

“I've been thinking of expanding the house some more. For now, in your room with the two of you until I can build extra rooms.”

“Absolutely not,” Techno lifts his head up and glares. “It was hard enough learning to sleep with this snoring asshole.”

“Hey, you sleep talk.” Wilbur retorts. The two glare at each other without any real heat behind it, Techno's curly tail beating against the armrest, Wilbur stubbornly crossing his arms.

“Boys,” Phil sighs tiredly. Only then does Techno realize just how exhausted Phil looks, how his wings curl around himself and droop, still dripping water onto the floor, using the wall to keep himself upright. “I have been flying through the rain for the past few hours. I'm going to dry off and change. Can you two warm-up some stew so we can continue this over dinner.”

The brothers eye each other for a moment, daring the other to make the first move.

“...fine,” Techno relents and gets up, ignoring Wilbur's blubbering protests, eyeing the boy. “What's your name?”

“I don't have one.” The boy said indignantly, nose turned up. “I never saw a use for one.”

“Well, that won't do. Do we have any ideas?” Phil glances between the twins, Techno shrugging helplessly, not saying any of the names that were whispered to him by the voices.

“What about...” Wilbur was eyeing the magma cube kid with a twinkle in his eye. The same one he got when he worked on naming his songs or naming their farm animals. “Tommy.”

Tommy, as it turns out, was exactly what Techno hated.

Tommy was brash and tireless and he didn't hesitate in anything he did. He laughed loud and bright and, despite everything that was thrown at him, he didn't let it stop him. Tommy had eyes of pure mischief and a heart of gold; with the spark of the child and a smile that went all the way through to his core.

He'd never shut up, he didn't understand boundaries, he would constantly steal his socks and lose them, he plays his discs during odd hours of the night. Wilbur was clearly his older brother; more often than not Tommy was attached to Wilbur's hips, rambling along and helping with the chores, clearly seeking his approval and, if Wilbur did happen to tell what a good job he did or laugh at a joke, Tommy would spend the rest of the day bragging about it.

This is why it came as a surprise to Techno when he was woken up in the middle of the night, his younger brother standing beside his bed, the yellow in his eyes had turned orange from all his previous crying.

“Tommy..? What time is it?” Techno yawned and sat up the best he could. When he opened his mouth to speak the words came out fitfully, the sounds half-swallowed by a sobbing noise. “Oh.” He mumbles unsure of how he was supposed to react. It was always *him* crawling into his brother's bed when the voices became too loud for him or having Phil make him a hot cup of cocoa while he told him what he could remember. “Alright, get in here before I change my mind.”

Wordlessly, Tommy climbs into his bed, Techno wrapping the duvet tightly around his shoulders, the two laying side by side, Tommy with both arms cushioned under his head catching the tears and snot that came slipping down his face. Techno sighs at the slime mess that was now beginning to stain his sheets. He hated laundry. “Want to talk about it?”

“N...no...” He’d never heard Tommy sound so broken up. The boy was always so charismatic, wearing his heart on his sleeve but never letting his sadness get the best of him.

“That’s fine.” Techno moves around until he’s comfortable, face buried against his pillow, hair draping around him. He can hear Tommy yawn and shift about in the bed. Then there is a hand clutching his sweater, fingers curled into the soft material. He isn’t sure how long it takes but when he lifts his head the boy is fast asleep. “Idiot.” He mumbles fondly, tugging the duvet further up over Tommy’s shoulder so he wouldn’t get cold, burying himself back into his pillow and returning to sleep.

Tommy doesn’t bring it up in the morning. Techno doesn’t either. But if Tommy starts sitting in during Techno’s sword training, cheering him on or rambling about his day, filling the silence with his exaggerated stories, he doesn’t mind it.

Maybe having a little brother wasn’t that bad.

They were visiting the village for supplies. The holiday had ended earlier that month and the festival celebrating it finally came to a close so most wares were on sale before they got new goods.

“Don’t spend too much, boys,” Phil said, handing them each a set amount of emeralds. “Especially you, Tommy. I *refuse* to let you fill the house with diamond blocks again.”

“Hey! I’m a damn good decorator, I’ll have you know,” Tommy puffs his cheeks out, greedily taking the emeralds. Techno follows Wilbur once he sets off, clearly having his mind set on something already, Tommy scrambling to keep up with the twins, chattering away.

The day was soon dwindling to an end. Wilbur bought himself a new guitar and some new sweaters, Tommy bought a cow (“A cow, Tommy, really? You couldn’t have been more creative?” “We have a connection!”) and a jukebox to play music on, and Techno bought a couple new swords and books. Phil was still taking his time browsing so the three wandered about the village exploring different shops.

“Hey, Blade!” Tommy calls from further inside the shepherd's store.

“He’s over there,” Wilbur said, able to see over all the numerous racks of clothes, pulling Techno to where their brother was. “What is it, Tommy?”

“You should totally buy this!” He spun on his heel and held up a red cape, accented by gold and fur lining the collar, the material swishing with his excited movements. “It’ll make you look so cool! And you’ll be a total hit with the ladies.”

“Tommy, shut up.” Wilbur smacked Tommy over the head. He took the cape while their brother complained about having a concussion, eyeing it. “The material is good. Would keep you warm during winter, but not stuffy enough that you’d sweat during summer.”

“Yea, and how much is it? Dad has already spent a fortune on everything else.” Techno said reasonably. He’d never admit it, but he didn’t feel like he deserved such a luxurious gift. It looked like something a king deserved, not a pigman.

“I’ll use my pocket cash. And no, you don’t get a say in this. We’re buying it.”

“Fuck yeah! You’re gonna look so damn cool, big man!”

“Kill me- kill me Technoblade just kill me- stab me- stab me with the sword-”

“Stop! I’m not going to kill you, Wil, you’re my brother!”

“You already have.”

Techno blinks and looks down. His hands gripped the hilt of a diamond sword splattered in blood, stabbed into the chest of his brother, his own hand gripping the blade. There was a crooked smile on his face, blood dripping down his mouth. “No- no no no no no NO!” He screamed and pressed his hands to the stab, but no matter the amount of pressure he applied, the blood had still gushed between his fingers and oozed under his hand, hot and fresh.

“It’s too late. You’ve already killed me.” When Techno looks up again, Phil has taken Wilbur’s place, wings mangled and feathers torn out tossed around his crumpled form, a bittersweet smile on his face. With a bloody hand, he cups Techno’s cheek, holding it fondly. Behind him, Wilbur stood by a button, grinning maniacally “Oh, my boy. My poor, poor boy...why have you done this..?”

“I didn’t- I didn’t mean to! I just- I-” Wilbur slams the button and TNT explodes the room.

“T-Techno..?” And then it was Tommy. Oh, *Tommy*. The poor boy looked so confused and scared, stumbling forward a couple times, collapsing to his knees. Behind him, a pair of withers destroy the world around them, people screaming as they are slaughtered. Techno rushes forward so he could scoop his younger brother in his arms, holding him close, tears stinging at his eyes. “Why did you...you k-killed us...”

“I didn’t mean to, Tommy, I didn’t mean to, I swear. I’m sorry. I’m so fucking sorry...” He sobbed, begging Tommy to stay with him, feeling the very fluid of his life drain away over his cold hands.

No, you aren’t. A hand rests on his shoulder. You wanted to kill them. You always have.

“No- they’re my family!”

godshavenoneedforfamily

only~sacrifices~

Techno whips around. He was in the Nether, the familiar red haze and heat causing him to break out in a cold sweat, a ghost screams in the distance. His parents laid upon the ground, lifeless, a piglet sitting between them covered in blood, staring up at Techno. When Techno blinks, the child is in front of him and *grins*, pushing him firmly on the chest and sending him spiraling into a pool of lava.

“*Make it all stop...*”

“There is no stopping it,” standing in front of him was an older version of himself, covered in scars from previous battles and wars, a ruby cloak with gold embroidery dawning his shoulders, a gold crown adorned with different gems sat atop his head. He crouches, a trident in hand, eyes nothing but white just like the piglin. “When the Blood God demands blood, you must deliver.”

“Why...why me..?” He implores. His counterpart, for the briefest of moments, looks remorseful then sighs. He brings the trident down and presses it to Techno’s chest, staring down with a blank expression.

“Because you were chosen.”

And he stabs him, the trident driven straight through his heart.

Techno wakes up with a pained gasp, shooting up in bed. It was still dark out. The curtains were pulled back, allowing moonlight to seep into the bedroom. Without thinking, Techno climbed out of bed, stumbling out of his room, ignoring how his muscles burned and his chest ached. He first checked on Wilbur, spying the teen neatly tucked under his quilt and snoring away, then Tommy, the boy haphazardly stretched across his bed, blankets thrown about every which way and his pillow resting across his face.

“It was just a dream...” Techno whispers and shuts the door gently. He slides to the floor, back pressed against the door. His hands were on his knees, struggling to regulate his breathing into something manageable, the world around him spinning. “Just...a dream...they’re safe...safe...”

butforhowmuchlonger?

you/cant/run/forever

“It’s about time you showed, asshole.” Techno spat, eyeing the trees with a sword in hand. Dream was stretched out across a branch like a cat, an arm cushioning his head, mask turned towards Techno. The only difference was his hair had grown, tied back into a neat bun.

“You grew fast.” Dream drawls out. Techno, now seventeen, having grown taller and filled out to the point that it was nearly impossible to tell he was a runt, stabs his sword into the ground and crosses his arms. “It’s time.”

“Yeah, I figured that out considering you’re back.”

“Now, we fight.”

“...here?!”

“No. Somewhere far away. Where we have nothing holding us back. There is...someone important here.” He still spoke cryptically, providing just enough information to answer the question while also sparking more in the process. “Say your goodbyes. You won’t be returning for some time.”

“I have another question for you.” Techno watched Dream groan, eventually waving a hand, indicating for him to continue. “Will they be safe?” He doesn’t have to specify who. There are only three people he cared about and it was clear Dream knew who they were. Dream is silent, as if not having expected the question, his head facing the sky. From the angle Techno stood at, he could see the slightest hint of freckled skin underneath the damn mask.

“...the voices will direct you to the location. I’ll be waiting, Technoblade.”

“How the fuck do you know my name-” in a flash of green, he was gone. “Asshole.”

Techno hated when Tommy cried.

“Do you *have* to leave? I mean, I’ve only had you for three years! That’s not enough time for a big brother! Wil had you for longer!” Tommy whines, fat tears rolling down his face, cheeks bright red, clutching Techno’s cloak preventing him from stepping away.

“I told you, it’s complicated. And I’ll be back. I’ll bring a bunch of cool stuff with me too.” Techno reassures him softly, affectionately tousling Tommy’s hair.

“Why can’t I come with you, big T? I won’t get in the way, I promise. We’d have a great time.”

“Right. You can’t even lift up a sword.” He teases, pressing his mouth against Tommy’s forehead in a kiss. For once, Tommy didn’t protest, bringing himself closer and hugging Techno close. While the teen could get on his nerves, he had really grown to care for him over the years. “I’ll be back, Tommy.”

“Make sure to write when you get the chance,” Phil says, having brought down the last of Techno’s bags for him, resting a hand on his son’s arm, smiling sadly. They had already said their tearful goodbyes the night before so Tommy and Wilbur wouldn’t witness their father’s breakdown, Techno repeatedly reassuring his father he’d come home safe and sound, having stayed up together until the sun was rising over the mountains and trees. “We’ll be alright back here.”

“I promise. Every chance I get.” Techno promises. Weakly, he breaks the hug with Tommy, giving his shoulder one last pat. He glances around. “Where’s Wilbur?”

Phil glances outside the door towards the stables. “Saddling up the horse. He...be easy with him. He’s taking this the hardest.” Slung his bags over his shoulder and giving the two one last hug, Techno stepped through the door heading towards the stable. Wilbur was brushing the horse’s mane, saddled up and ready for him, not turning when Techno began loading his bags up.

“...so, you’re really leaving,” Wilbur mumbled. His hair was covering the side of his face that Techno could see hiding whatever expression he wore. His movements were robotic, stance tense.

“Yeah. I have to.” Techno finished strapping his bag in place. He didn’t know how far he was going, but the voices told him it would be a long journey so he prepared what he could, hoping there would be many more villages along the way for pit stops.

Suddenly, Wilbur spun on him. “No, you don’t! You can just stay here! There is no reason for you to go out there and fight that fucking maniac!” He screamed. He refused to look away, even as his lips trembled and his shoulders heaved with emotion, unwilling to back down.

Tears clung heavily to his dark lashes. His hands were clenched into shaking fists, in a desperate battle against his own grief and fear at losing his brother. A lone tear slipped down his cheek, and just like that, the floodgates opened. He wept, tears streaming from his golden eyes, loud, heaving sobs tearing from his throat, and still, he did not look away. “Please- please, Techno, stay. We- *I* need you. You’re my brother. Please...I can’t lose you.”

“Wil...” Techno pulls Wilbur into a crushing hug. He might’ve been shorter than his brother but he didn’t let it get in the way. Wilbur sobbed into his chest unceasingly, hands clutching at his cape. He held him in silence, rocking him slowly as his tears soaked his chest.

“*And you’re still wearing the stupid fucking cape...*” He murmurs. Techno presses his face against Wilbur’s hair, sighing softly, acting as a warm presence for him to vent everything out on. He always did have a hard time expressing his emotions the older he got.

“You bought it for me. I think there’s a rule somewhere in big brother etiquette that I kinda have to.” He jokes lightly, smiling when it gets a snicker out of Wilbur. “I’ll be back, Will, I promise. I’m not going away forever. I just...this is *something* I need to do for myself. I’ll be sending letters to keep in touch as well. Is there something you want me to bring back in particular?”

“Just stay in one piece, you idiot.” Wilbur sighs, deflating in Techno’s arms, knowing once he had his mind set on something there was no changing it, and Techno was set on getting answers.

“Keep an eye on dad and Tommy for me while I’m gone. I know Tommy gets on your nerves, but he really looks up to you.”

“...you really are the older one. And all this time I hoped it would be me. That maybe we’d discover some long lost birth records that made you younger.”

“Not my fault you’re a beta male and I’m cooler.” There is a pregnant pause before the two burst out into laughter, clutching each other close, committing the hug to memory.

Being a God, Technoblade realized, wasn’t as half bad as he thought it’d be.

There were so many different worlds that Dream showed him.

“They’re called Realms,” Dream told him over what constituted as dinner. The two were recovering from their latest duel, Techno using the stream that cut through the forest for a mirror with a hunting knife slicing through his hair, the pink strands falling into a messy pile around his hunched form. He loved his long hair, but he quickly learned how much of a hindrance it was in battle. His scalp was still sore after Dream nearly tugged his braid off during their fight. “I’ve even created one.”

“You did?” Techno snorted in disbelief, chewing on his mutton.

“Well, a version of me did. It’s complicated. Anyways, we can travel to them freely. Mortals require permission- an invitation if you will. This one-” he gestures around the world around them, the flames reflecting against his mask, the stupid band-aids scattered across all the cracks. “Is mine.”

“What’s it called?”

“Dream SMP.”

“...you really enjoy stroking your own ego, don’tcha?”

heistoocockytostrong

you should kill him

Nearly every Realm was a carbon copy of each other with a few differences; new cities, new people, sometimes new mobs, some completely barren of any life, and some overpopulated till it congested. Hypixel became Techno’s favorite besides Home (he refused to call it Dream SMP just to watch Dream fume), a hub for people to hone their skills and battle against others for glory and fame.

“Why are you so interested in me?” Techno asked one morning, the two preparing for another war they had somehow found themselves in. Not that Techno was complaining; wars meant blood for the blood god, which meant appeasing the voices. Dream stood amongst the trees adorning his

brand new set of enchanted netherite armor they'd gotten after a rather nostalgic venture to the Nether, and readjusting his poncho over the chest plate. "There are other gods. Hell, I've fought some of them. But why me?"

"Because I never created you." Dream said simply. He turned, the black dots on his mask staring into Techno's soul. "Everything on the SMP- every blade of grass and grain of sand- I created with my very two hands. You- you were an anomaly. I simply found that interesting. And," he sets a hand on Techno's shoulder, having begun to step past, his voice going lower, hysteria seeping into it.

"You're the reason I'm not bored anymore."

Phil, as it turns out, lied when he told them Tommy would be the last orphan he took in.

"Who're they?" Dream, the nosy fucker, asked, a head poked over Techno's shoulder. In Phil's latest letter there was a photo attached along with a gift for his twentieth birthday.

Phil stood in the back with his wings stretched out to encompass the others, his long hair having been buzzed short, eyes scrunched up and smiling widely. Wilbur had a hand tucked away in a pocket and was looking away from the camera, clearly not happy about being there, a hand holding up a peace sign behind Tommy's head giving him bunny ears. Tommy had his arms thrown about a messy brown-haired boy with little ram horns, smiling from ear-to-ear, blurry in the photo from his constant movement. The unfamiliar boy with blue eyes and a sheepish smile must've been Tubbo.

"I found him in a box," Phil wrote in the attached letter. "I just couldn't leave him out there. He's been sharing Tommy's room and the two are inseparable. He's been helping me around the house and has an odd fascination with bees. You'd like him."

"My family." Techno smiled.

Techno's letters grew farther and farther apart in time.

In the first few months, he sent a letter nearly every week, telling of his adventures and the things he'd seen, books for Wilbur and new discs for Tommy and seeds for Phil's farm being sent alongside them. Slowly the weeks turned to months and months became years. It certainly pleased the voices well enough, no longer threatening his family with whispers of death and murder, happy that he no longer had anything holding him back from quenching their endless hunger for spilt blood, but the guilt weighed heavy in Techno's gut.

"No letter this time?" Dream had asked, genuinely sounding surprised. Techno's last letter was a year ago.

"They don't need to know what I've been doing lately," Techno mumbled. He sat by a river, scrubbing a rag down his axe, scraping off dried blood from another false idol they'd hunted down, the red-turned-brown flakes polluting the once crystal clear water.

"Alright, well, I'll be heading back to the SMP for some time. I have some business to take care of, so you'll be on your own for a while. Let me know if you change your mind about the letters" He hated to admit it, but he'd developed a hate-love relationship with Dream. While the man could be straight up insufferable most days, he was also the closest thing Techno had to kin. Phil, Wilbur, and Tommy were his family, but Dream *understood* him.

“Not my problem. If anything, this is a plus for me. Now I don’t have to see your green ass everywhere.”

“You love me.” Dream singsongs, clapping his hands together and squishing them against his cheek, practically radiating flowers and rainbows and sunshine. It made Techno sick.

“I almost killed you during our last duel.” He scraped harder on his sword for emphasis, the sharp edge glinting in the sunlight. “Wanna test how far that love goes?”

“Alright, alright! Point taken!” Despite everything, Techno was smiling. He liked his new life. Constant action, always a threat to battle, people to beat. It reminded him of his life in the Nether.

But, some days, he’d find himself longing for the old days where he’d spar in the backyard, Tommy cheering him on from the sidelines and Wilbur working on his newest songs until Phil came and called them for dinner.

He missed his family.

SMPEarth was a breath of fresh air in Techno’s repetitive life. Nearly all the people who had been invited were gods and goddesses or otherwise mortals who had done such admirable feats that the Creators felt inclined to let them join. His goal was simple; world domination. Really, it was just to test the limits of his strength and willpower now that he didn’t have Dream looming over his shoulder. It was survival of the fittest and Techno had spent his entire childhood learning how to withstand whatever was thrown at him.

gonorththereislanduntouchedlandforus

prepare your resources don't let them all

So, Techno went North.

Past the endless forests and deserts, through nations building their walls and shaking the hands of peace with crossed fingers behind their backs, killing those foolish enough to hunt him down. Until, finally, his destination was reached. There is no more color in the Arctic, only a blank white page, untouched by anything else. Though the night seemed never-ending and the cold bit harder with every passing hour, each one was a step closer to his ultimate uprising. Until then, he had a job to do, and he would do it to the best of his ability.

And when Techno defeated the creatures that roamed the fortress of an ancient civilization long since forgotten, he knew that his patience hadn’t been for naught, that his suffering had finally paid off. As those who had dared venture into his lands watched him plant the flag into the snow, the banner telling of his claim over the land and his conquest, his manic laughter echoing across the tundra, they knew there was no hope.

The Antarctic Empire was born.

Techno woke up from a restless sleep to the resounding sounds of pounding on his front door. He’d just returned from a war against his next-door nation and the fatigue of the long journey still plagued his body. As he sat up, his bones cracked, snout buried between his hands, having been too exhausted to even shift into his preferred form. Eventually, Techno got out of bed and stumbled across to the other side of the room when the knocks came again, louder and stronger than before.

“M coming!” He shouted and cleared his throat. Tugging his cloak around himself as one did a

robe, Techno headed out through the fortress he'd made his new home, grabbing a sword along the way just in case. He lifted the latches that kept the wooden gates shut, easing the old doors open allowing bitter gusts of wind to come barreling inside, snow being thrown across the cobblestone floors. "What the hell do you wa..." The words die on Techno's tongue. "...dad?"

Phil was dressed in heavy furs and covered in snow, but even in the unfamiliar clothes, Techno recognized the black wings that hugged his shivering form, blue eyes softening upon the sight of him. Before Phil could draw in the air his body needed to speak, Techno had melted into his form, pulling the smaller man into his grasp. He could feel his firm torso and the heart that beats within, feeling like a piglet all over again, shaken up from a nightmare and crawling into his father's bed for comfort.

"Oh, Techno..." Phil murmurs, burying his face into Techno's shoulder. His hands are folded around his back, drawing him in closer. Techno could feel his body shake and, before he realized it, felt tears slip down his face for the missed time they could never make back, crying to release the tension of these long years. Phil pulls back just far enough so he could cup Techno's face and wipes the tears with a calloused finger. Even this roughness brought more relief than his heart could hold. "As much as I enjoy the hug, can I come inside? I have been traveling through the snow for the past week and my wings are freezing off."

"Right- fuck- come in," as if his father was made of fragile glass, Techno gently ushered him inside, slamming the gates shut and letting the latches fall back into their rightful place. Phil stood in the stair hall, taking in everything that Techno had cleaned up after deciding to live in the fortress since he was rather shit at building, removing a couple layers and warming up his hands. "What are you doing here? How did you even find me? I haven't-" the letters. Techno hadn't sent a letter in nearly four years. The guilt hit him all at once. "I...has it really been that long..?"

"It has. It doesn't feel like it, I know. Especially when you get to my age, the days seem to just blur together." And yet Phil sounds at ease, not the slightest bit upset, but Techno knows deep down his father had distressed.

"I meant to write."

you didn't know you didn't

why not tell them what we've done what we've accomplished?

"Shut up." Techno grumbles, having spent so long with just himself and the voices residing in the fortress that he'd taken to speaking out loud with them. Sometimes, they'd hold conversations that could stretch throughout the day. Sometimes, he'd get no response.

"Still hearing them, huh?" Phil stepped over and cupped Techno's face again. There was a sad smile on his face. "Well, I'm just glad you're okay."

"Why are you here? The others-"

He sighs and his wings droop. "Left. About a year ago, actually. Wil and I...there were a lot of things said. Things I regret. The next thing I knew, he was packing his things and storming out the door. Tommy and Tubbo went rushing after him."

"Dad..." Techno didn't know things had gotten so messy. The last time he saw them, they had all been so attached and, despite all of Wilbur's empty threats, he had thought they'd all live together forever. "Do you know where they went?"

youjustdidntwanttogobackyou didnt want them to need you

but they don't need you they never have

“That’s actually why I came to see you. I pulled a lot of strings to get here. Come, we should sit somewhere for this.”

“How *did* you even get let into the Realm?” He found himself asking, forgetting that most people didn’t know of the Realms, having spent so long amongst heroes and legends rather than the ordinary. Techno led Phil into the parlor, tossing a few logs into the fireplace and getting a fire started to help warm his father up, sitting down in an armchair parallel to Phil.

“You forget I defeated Herobrine.” Phil laughed. He began removing his scarf, letting the striped cloth hang off the armrest. “Your brothers...they started an entire nation. L’manburg, they’re calling it. I only know what came down the grapevine, but I know there was a war.”

(“I’ll be heading back to the SMP for some time. I have some business to take care of, so you’ll be on your own for a while.”)

“Thankfully, Wilbur and the others won.” Techno relaxed into his chair.

“You could have led with that, dad. Here I was thinking they were-”

“They were exiled, Techno. I saw Wilbur and Tommy’s wanted posters being put up in the village.” He whispered elbows perched on his knees and hands clasped together, brows knit together, shoulders tense. “They’re- whoever is leading L’manburg now has put out a lot of money for people to hunt them down. Tubbo sent me a letter recently letting me know that he was safe, but the others...I’m worried Wilbur will do something rash.”

“Why couldn’t you help them?” He watched Phil deflate, looking so small in the chair, eyes burning holes into the floors. “I mean, Wilbur *adores* you.” Phil chuckled but there was no humor behind it. Just regret.

“I’m not so sure about that anymore. We haven’t talked in a year. Tommy wrote letters when the nation was still founding, but Wilbur never said anything. I think he still hates me for what was said that night. You...you and Wil have always been close. Twins, you called each other. If anyone could save him, it’d be you.” Silence fell over the room once Phil was done. The shutters over the windows rattled every so often from the snowstorm outside and the fire crackled, but neither man spoke. Techno moved so he stood by the fireplace, watching the fire crackle and consume the logs, the voice thankfully silent.

“I...alright,” Techno mumbled. “I’ll go. If I need you, I’ll send a friend your way.”

“Thank you, Techno.” A hand settled between his shoulders, Phil standing beside him. “I’ll stay here and watch over things for you.” He stares into the fire, eyes telling of a lifetime of struggle that had never been put into words before and probably never would. The shame ate at Techno.

“...they’re such fucking idiots...”

“Yeah,” Phil openly laughed and patted Techno’s back a couple of times. Techno smiled a bit. “Yeah, you guys are, but you’re *my* idiots. We’ll be alright, Techno.”

“I know.”

He knew it wouldn't be long until Dream was tracking him down.

The green asshole was a lot more involved in his brothers' stupid nation than Techno initially learned and, once he returned to Dream SMP, he knew Dream would be on the hunt for him. Techno just hoped they wouldn't be on opposing sides. The land L'manburg had been founded upon was beautiful, Techno would give that point to Wilbur, but once he stepped across the threshold, he knew just how much blood went into its foundation, of the lives lost and things sacrificed.

Using the voices as a guide, Techno made his way through the oak forest, his boots leaving footprints in the mud, the only noise coming from the animals that meandered about, a couple sheep passing by Techno along the way. When Techno heard shouts he reached for his sword, his years of combat knowledge kicking in and helping lighten his steps, inching towards the source before jumping, grabbing the nearest person, and holding them up against a tree.

"Tubbo! You fucking bastard let him go-" the person who had been screaming at Techno abruptly came to a stop. "...Techno..?"

"Tommy?" Techno turned and found himself face to face with his younger brother. The boy was much taller than when he'd last seen him, nearly reaching Techno's height when he used to just barely reach his elbow, his blonde hair had grown past his ears and fluffier, blue irises bright and wide in shock. "Oh, then this is Tubbo." Quickly, Techno let go of the boy he had been holding up, dusting off Tubbo's shoulders. Tubbo didn't look too different than he did in the photo, but his horns were longer now, curling up and back towards his fluffy ears.

"Um, hello. I'm Tub-"

"TECHNO!!" Tommy's shrill voice alone nearly knocked Techno off his feet and the sudden weight that had thrown itself upon his body didn't help either. Stabbing his sword in the ground, Techno turns and wraps his arms around Tommy to steady himself, the teen weakly punching his brother's chest repeatedly. "You *asshole!* Where the fuck have you been, huh?! What was that about letters and visiting? You liar! You bastard! You traitor! You- you- you-"

"I missed you too, Tommy." He sighed, eyeing Tubbo who stood by the tree he'd previously been pinned against, shuffling his shoes on the grass awkwardly. "Alright, kid, c'mere. I'm only doing this once because I'm in a good mood." Techno unwraps an arm from around Tommy's waist indicating for Tubbo to join the hug.

"Oh, no, I'm good-" Tubbo cuts off into a surprised squeak when his collar is grabbed and he is dragged forward into the group hug, being squished against Techno's chest and Tommy's side. "Oh, this is nice."

"Damn right it is. I give the best fucking hugs." Techno said proudly, ignoring Tommy's angry sniffles against his shoulder and fists still pounding on his chest. Tubbo eyes the blond in obvious concern. "He'll be fine just give it a minute. He's just throwin' a tantrum."

"I AM FUCKING NOT!"

That night, after being shown where Pogtopia was and taking stock of what he had to work with, Techno saw Wilbur. Tommy was fast asleep on a blanket and Tubbo had left earlier since he was working as a spy, so it was just Techno left awake, speaking with the voices in his head on his plan of action.

“You’re back.” Wilbur’s voice came drifting down from above, the lanky man slowly descending the stone staircase that led to the outside. He looked the worst for wear, heavy bags hanging under his eyes, skin too pale for it to be considered healthy or normal, a limp in his walk from the war against Dream. Carefully, as to not disturb Tommy, Techno gets up, meeting his brother halfway. As Techno stepped in for a hug, Wilbur turned away. “Did dad tell you?”

“He told me enough. I came here out of my own accord. Wil, you idiot, you should have told me earlier-”

“Yes, well, there's a problem with that considering we hadn't heard from you in *four fucking years!*” His voice rose until it was nearly a shout, only calming down once he realized Tommy was asleep, running a hand through his hair and breathing heavily. “So, go on. Tell me.”

“Tell you what?” Techno stood a step forward. Wilbur was tearing at the seams and it pained him to watch his brother spiral into a pit he was unable to help him out of.

“That this-” Wilbur gestured around himself. “Is useless. That there is no hope. That we should give up and turn tail. Go back home crawling on our knees.”

“I’m here to *help* you, Wil. I won’t stand for corrupt governments, and Tommy told me what happened on the day of the election.”

“You...” He looked so lost, frantic eyes darting about Techno’s face, searching for any hint of lying, fingers curled into the sleeves of his coat. “You...” And, slowly, a sad smile stretched across Wilbur’s face. “...I missed you, you big oaf.” This time when Techno stepped in for the hug, Wilbur didn’t turn away, melting into his brother’s embrace, clutching onto him tightly. “I’m...I’m losing it down here, Tech. I don’t...fuck, I don’t know how much longer I can do this on my own.”

“You aren’t alone. You have your brothers. You have me. I’ll stay until this thing is finished and then, once you’ve got your nation back, we could leave if we wanted. I have an empire of my own. No one could bother us there.” Techno offers, squeezing his eyes shut when tears threatened to fall, Wilbur holding onto him tighter.

“We both really are power-hungry bitches, huh?”

“Yeah, but at least I didn’t hold an election. I just had to kill some shit and stare until people got scared and ran away.”

“It was a good idea at the time...” Wilbur sighs, his voice small, pressing himself closer like he would when they were kids, hiding in Techno’s arms from the storm that would rage on outside, the thunder having scared him awake. “I’m glad you’re back, Techno. Was kinda startin’ to lose hope there.”

“Well, now you’ve got the Blade on your side. We’ll win this thing, Wil. I promise.”

“Um...Technoblade..?”

Techno was feeding Tommy’s stolen skeleton horse when Tubbo came over, fiddling with his suit cuffs, avoiding making direct eye contact. He sometimes forgot just how young the boy was, having been thrust into the clutches of war so early on in life and still smiling through it all, having done better than Techno did the first time he entered a battlefield. “Do...do we have to kill Schlatt..? I know- I know it’s probably the best solution, but I just...”

“You want peace,” Techno finishes for him. Tubbo nods. He sighs, petting the horse then climbing

out of the makeshift stables he'd built. Tubbo jumps when he sets a hand on his head, ruffling his neatly combed brown hair causing it to stick in different directions. "That's understandable. You're young. I was like that, too. But with people like Schlatt, they don't give up. Once they've tasted power it's the only thing they want."

"Then...isn't Wilbur like that too..?" He's quiet, speaking as if he was thinking out loud rather than asking a direct question, small and innocent and naive to the cruelties of the universe.

"Wil is..." He trails off, having been wondering it himself. His brother might smile and laugh and joke, but Techno saw him at night, staring deep into the embers of the fire until it burnt out completely, the mania that swirled in his bloodshot eyes. "He's got us, so don't worry about him. I'll keep us safe." Techno ruffles Tubbo's hair again earning a giggle from the boy. "And don't call me 'Technoblade,' only my enemies call me that. It sounds weird. Just call me Techno or something."

"Okay, Techno." Tubbo looks up and smiles. His eyes were bright just like Tommy's. Techno couldn't help but smile back. "I should get back to Manburg in case someone notices I'm gone but..." His cheeks flush, directing his gaze elsewhere, nervously tapping his index fingers together. "I was wondering, um, if uh...we could um...talk more sometime..?"

"Sure, kid. You like bees, right?" Techno's smile grows when Tubbo nods enthusiastically, head shooting up. "Maybe, once things cool off, we can build a bee farm together."

"Yeah- yeah! I'd like that!" The teen just looked so *happy* at the mere suggestion, practically vibrating joy.

And as Tubbo ran off, waving behind his shoulder, his smile growing when Techno waved back, he found himself thinking it wouldn't be too bad having another brother.

"Te...Techno..?"

4...

"I want you to kill him, Technoblade!" Schlatt screamed. Tubbo was backed up into a box, hands clutching the fence that blocked his only escape, eyes wide in fear, repeatedly glancing past Techno's shoulder to where he knew Wilbur and Tommy were stationed.

"S-Schlatt? Y-You've got this all wrong!" It wasn't supposed to go this way. It was just going to be a festival. Wilbur was going to blow up a few minor explosives, Techno would kill Schlatt, Tommy would get Tubbo and run, and everything would be over. None of this was supposed to happen.

bloodforthebloodgod

KILL KILL KILL KILL

3...

This was Tommy's best friend. His own *brother*. Just a boy who loved bees and wanted peace, who had dreams and aspirations and goals, who reminded him of a young Wilbur, wide-eyed and curious for what the world held for him.

His head hurt. He couldn't handle peer pressure. He didn't want to disappoint anymore.

bloodforthebloodgodbloodforthebloodgod

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

“Tubbo, I’m sorry,” Techno said. He felt as though his blood were on fire. His limbs were moving on their own, lifting up the crossbow, a firework locked in ready for release. He was disconnected from everything but the ever-present sound of his drumming heart. “I’ll- I’ll make it as painless as possible.”

He felt like crying.

2...

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

He pulled the trigger.

Tubbo’s screams echoed in his ears.

[Tubbo_ went off with a bang.]

“You bastard! You killed Tubbo! How could you! We fucking trusted you! *He* trusted you! And you- you-” And then Tommy was there, screaming at him, punching his chest as hard he could despite the angry tears streaming down his face. Why was Tommy screaming? What did he do?

“I...” Techno blinked sluggishly, peering into the box. There was blood and gunpowder splattered against the walls where Tubbo once had been locked inside. There was screaming from the courtyard and arrows came whizzing past Techno, one landing in Tommy’s arm before the boy tossed another enderpearl and ran for his life.

killthemallkillthembloodforthebloodgodkillkillkill

He focuses on the voices that whisper into his ear, the calm amongst the storm of chaos surrounding him, his grip on the crossbow tightening. He was back in the Nether, staring up at the piglin brute that killed his parents, their blood splattered against him in one last hug, his heart beat thrumming in his ears. He watched the piglin raise his golden sword. One strike. That’s all it would take.

kill everyone

LIE NENE ESCAPE

Everything went red.

“Are you sure you’re alright, Tubbo?” Tommy’s soft voice reached Techno’s ears from where he was standing. He was sitting next to Tubbo, looking over the severe explosion scar that ran from his neck up to his chin and across some of his cheek, his own knuckles bandaged with blood seeping through the cloth, his eye bruised.

“I’m fine, Tommy, really. I didn’t even feel it. You didn’t have to fight him, you know. I already told him I forgave him.” Tubbo mumbled, giving Tommy a weak smile, squeezing his brother’s hand. At the mention of the fight, Techno’s ribs ached. Tommy landed a rather good punch on him during their time in the pit. If they hadn’t been on such sour terms he would’ve been proud.

“He’s a fucking asshole, Tubbo. He said he would help us and he *killed* you. I’ll *never* forgive

him.” He spat and that was all Techno needed to hear. Using the wall for support, he climbed his way out of the ravine, spotting Wilbur hunched over on top of the bed, hands clasped and eyes staring at the wall in deep thought, not even acknowledging Techno as he passed.

Techno’s hair sticks, soaked, to his skin, rain heavily pouring around him while he kept walking, unphased. It was only when Techno reached the cliff that overlooked Manburg that he stopped.

“Dad,” Techno said, throat thick with emotions and voice coming out broken, half between a sob and a shout, staring towards Phil with watery eyes.

“Techno.” Phil didn’t turn, staring out into the rain. Techno steps up to his father’s side watching the dark clouds roll by overhead. Manburg still stood as if nothing had happened, the citizens fast asleep in their houses, most of the lights off except for the mandatory ones. Phil didn’t put a wing around him, this time. Techno didn’t hug him.

“I’ve...promise me we’ll be alright,” *because I don’t know if we will be anymore.* Wet streaks are sliding down Phil’s face. Techno didn’t know if they were tears or rain. Everything hurt. There were too many emotions raging through Techno for him to pin down and work through. Wordlessly, Phil turned, starting to walk away. “Wilbur is planning on blowing up Manburg. I...he has the explosives to do it. I don’t know where his stupid fucking control room- he won’t show me- but he won’t change his mind and- and- dad, please, help him. I can’t...I don’t think I can save him anymore.”

Phil stands there for a few moments longer before Techno hears the telltale sound of his wings flapping. Soon, it was just Techno left alone in the rain, collapsing onto his knees and screaming out into the night.

“*WILBUR!!!*”

Tommy’s scream of anguish tore Techno away from the person he had been fighting and towards his brother. There was a crowd gathered on the remnants of what had been Manburg, everyone turned towards where the presidential podium had been, watching where-

“Wilbur...?”

(*“You killed us...”*)

Phil clutched Wilbur’s lifeless body in his arms, a diamond sword stabbed through his abdomen and out the other side, blood coating the blade. Fights around Techno broke out, more TNT went off, crossbows were fired. Techno didn’t move from his spot. He just stared.

(*“If I become king, will you be there with me?”*)

(*“Of course, Wilbur.”*)

He hadn’t been there for him.

When Wilbur needed him most, Techno was off at war, satisfying his own carnal needs, slaughtering hundreds for the entertainment of the god that plagued his mind. He is taken out of his stupor when a fist collides with his face sending him stumbling. Tommy stood by his side, his screams falling on deaf ears, bloodied and bruised from the explosion. Tubbo was beside Tommy with tears streaming down his face, fear shining in his eyes, an arrow lodged in his knee. The two boys, once so innocent and pure, now beaten and corrupted, caught in the twisted game the gods had made for them.

Once brothers now enemies standing on opposing sides.

hebetrayedyou

~~he never loved you~~

“Why?! Why are you doing all of this?!” Tommy was screaming, pleading for an answer, for *something*. “Wilbur is *dead* because of you!”

theyknewyourmotivesfromthestartandbetrayedyouanyways

~~itwasaall-a-trick-from-the-beginning~~

Maybe, if they didn't instill a new government, Wilbur would still be alive. Maybe Techno could see him smile again, hear him sing again, hold him in his arms again. Maybe they could have left this all behind, retire into the fortress in the North and create a home again, rekindle the flame of their family.

killthem

~~showthem/whathappens-to-traitors/~~

Distantly, Techno was aware of Dream's presence behind him, watching everything that he long since sowed the seed of destruction for. He knew he was playing right into his hands.

He didn't care anymore. Digging through his inventory, Techno holds up a wither skull, watches as Tubbo shrinks back and Tommy's breath hitches.

“Tommy...do you think you're a hero, Tommy?”

Retirement suited Techno.

It reminded him of the early days when he'd help Phil plant potatoes in the garden, being shown how to dig holes into the ground, his hands dirty and stinking by the time they were done. Wilbur would be waiting on the couch when they'd come in, never one for farming, either strumming his guitar or reading a book, shrieking when Techno shoved his dirty hands in his brother's face just for the hell of it, chasing him around the house while Phil watched on and laugh.

Getting potatoes to grow in the cold was definitely trial and error. Techno hadn't made a farm for himself in the Antarctic Empire, feeding off the farm animals he'd kill or the bread he traded for, but now that he was on the run it was smart to have a constant supply of food. He knew it was stupid for him to stay when New L'manburg wanted his head on a pike and when his brothers hated him, but he refused to leave his family again even if they didn't want him. So, he stayed and farmed and read and locked his swords away hoping he'd never have to touch them again.

Phil visited when the man had a chance, having appeared on his cottage doorstep one day with his hat off and a bittersweet smile on his face, keeping Techno updated on the news in New L'manburg and of the butcher army that was being formed. He never stayed long, though, always leaving before nightfall so he could return and watch over Tommy and Tubbo. They didn't know what would happen if they found out he'd been visiting the person they considered responsible for everything.

Ghostbur visited as well. Oddly enough, the voices *liked* him. Most times Techno would spot the ghost hovering by his stables, cooing to Carl and feeding him carrots or throwing seeds for the

chickens, always changing their names because he could never remember. He'd always invite Ghostbur inside, listening to his stories and talk of their childhood, the familiar strum of guitar filling the house as his soft singing helped lull him into a sense of peace.

At first, Techno avoided him. He couldn't bear to see his brother after everything that had happened, worried he would do something he'd regret, but then Ghostbur grabbed his hand and smiled and he was a piglet all over again, having followed the boy out of a Nether portal and into the Overworld, his hands being clutched.

("Techno? What are you doing?")

"Stay."

("Okay.")

"Are you sure you're the older one?" Ghostbur had laughed, so happy and free of all the burdens that plagued him in life. "Cause, you're certainly having one hell of a tantrum."

Ghostbur never stayed long either. He always left after a day or two, insistent that New L'manburg needed him, and Techno could never bring himself to say otherwise, waving the ghost off as he'd leave, a collection of rocks ("Blue," Ghostbur called it) in his house, promising to come to visit again sometime soon.

Most days, though, Techno was alone. He sat back in his chair, sighing and staring up to the ceiling, the planks blurring together. He rubbed his eyes until they were separated again.

"Fuck..." He mutters, pinching his nose, the tears building up in his eyes despite his best attempts. "I hate being alone..."

"Tommy really needs you, Techno," Ghostbur murmured, nervously twiddling his thumbs. Techno just grunted and chopped down another tree, collecting the logs in his arms, only half paying attention to the ghost's rambles. "Really! He...he won't talk to me anymore. I'm worried about him. He thinks everyone is against him and...I think...I think he wants to be ghostinnit, if you know what I mean."

Techno's blood chilled. *No.*

"...he's still living in the same place, right? The idiot hasn't decided to try and move closer to L'manburg or whatever." He demanded, quickly gathering his things.

"Oh, yes! I mean, no. I mean, we still live in Logstedshire, yes. Wait, does this mean you'll visit? Oh, this is great! Lads on tour! It'll be the three of us together again! Now we just need Phil and Tubbo. Dadza and Tubs." Techno tuned in about halfway in, heading home and getting changed, grabbing his trident knowing it would be faster than taking Carl.

gogogogo

find him!

Whenever the voices were happy about something, nothing good came out of it, but he decided he'd worry about it another time. Techno didn't check and see if Ghostbur was following when he jumped into the ocean, propelling himself through the waters, breaking the surface, and launching onto the shore once he reached his destination. The island hadn't changed much from his last visit; Tommy's tent still sat on a hill, Ghostbur's campsite was still there, the logs with a pumpkin head

was still- okay, that was new.

“That’s Tommy’s hotter girlfriend,” Ghostbur supplied when he saw Techno staring for too long. “His hot girlfriend got stolen.”

“...right. Where’s Tommy?” Techno glanced around the field, trying to spot his brother, heart pounding in his chest.

toolatetoolatehesgoneyouretoolatehesdeadanditsallyourfault

he's near he's here/look took look

“What the hell are *you* doing here?” Techno never thought he’d be so relieved to hear Tommy’s voice. The teen stepped down from his Nether portal, and at least he kept the shoes Techno gave him from his previous visit. His shirt had rips and tears in it, dirt turning the white of it a grayish color, the vibrant red having been rubbed out till it was murky. There were heavy bags under his eyes and, despite living in the sun, his skin was rather pale. The worst was his eyes- nearly all the blue was gone. He looked like the piglins Techno had been so desperate to befriend. Lifeless. Empty. Defeated.

“He’s visiting, Tommy! We’re lads on tour, remember?” Ghostbur chimes in, floating over to Tommy’s side, smiling widely. Tommy gave their dead brother a glance then stormed off without a word. “Oh...”

“Tommy.” Techno followed after Tommy, easily catching up with his tired strides. “Tommy-stop-”

“No, you stop!” Tommy spun, glaring up at him. It was clear he wanted to cry, his bottom lip quivering, but he didn’t have any tears left which only helped fuel his anger. “You- you don’t have the fucking *right* to come here after everything you’ve done! You- you- you fucking *bastard!* I hate you! I hate you so fucking much and- and-”

“I’m sorry,” the honest confession left him silent, so Techno pushed on. “I’m sorry. I...I thought I was helping you, but I wasn’t. I was doing what helped *me*. I’m not sorry for trying to destroy the government.” Tommy huffs and turns his head, but he doesn’t storm off again. Techno takes this as a good sign. “But I’m sorry for encouraging Wilbur. I’m sorry for killing Tubbo. I’m sorry for not realizing just how bad things were and for letting it go on. I’m a changed man, Tommy. I’ve- for the love of Notch, I’ve seen a *lot*. I’ve *done* a lot of things. I was ashamed of myself for the longest time I couldn’t bring myself to face everything I had done. But if running means losing my family in the process then I’m done running. So...please, Tommy.”

“...I really fuckin’ hate you, ya know,” Tommy mumbled. He kicked at the grass with his shoe and he avoided eye contact, but the meaning behind his words was still received; *I forgive you*.

“The feeling’s mutual, idiot,” Techno grunted; *I love you*. And that was all it took. In two quick strides, Tommy reached Techno, crushing himself against his brother’s chest, arms wrapping around his shoulders as best he could with the height difference. Techno sighs into Tommy’s hair, a hand cupping his head, holding him close, having forgotten what it felt like to hold his youngest brother. The world around them melted away as Techno squeezed him back, not wanting the moment to end. “Let’s go home, Theseus.”

“Yeah...okay, big man.”

Neither noticed the ghost of the brother who watched on with a bittersweet smile, a hint of yellow

shining in his hollow eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Omg this took me a few nights of no sleep to write, but it's finally ready! My child! I hope you guys enjoyed! Let me know in the comments your thoughts, predications, questions, etc etc. I love hearing feedback to helps keep the low self-esteem at bay ;) Subscribe to Technoblade

WE GOT FANART!!!!!!

[fanart by ghostbugs](#)

I have a moments on my Twitter dedicated to this fic with extra lore and insight into the process of making this if y'all are curious!!

Also feel free to check out my Twitter! I mostly retweet a lot of art and memes, but I post updates on my fics and sometimes little previews of whats coming up!

[Twitter](#)

Chaos

Chapter Summary

“Maybe not all gods are bad after all,” Phil mutters. Dream is taken aback when a hand settles on his head, the hybrid smiling down at him kindly. “Alright, I’ll take your offer. I just need you to do me a favor.”

“Anything.” Dream says and he means it. He may not have known the man very well, but he had done so many courageous deeds for the universe without wanting anything in return.

“I want you to promise me that he’ll be safe in this Realm. There...I know I can’t protect him forever, but...” He trails off and stares down at the infant in his arms, eyes full of love and adoration. “Promise me that.”

“I promise.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream vividly remembers death.

There had been no air in that menacing world; the lack of oxygen descended on his mind with panic. A mist fell over his eyes. He could feel his heart beating against his rib cage, slowing every second. He tried to move his chest, tried to suck in air, but nothing came. His heart stopped. His mind gave one final sigh. Then he felt nothing at all

The memories of his life flashed before him in pieces of shattered glass, piercing through the void. Of amethyst flames burning down villages and flesh, leaving naught but ash and destruction in their path. The weight of a sword in hand as he donned the ceremonial armor and descended into the stronghold, his village’s latest sacrifice to the queen of the End.

The bright flashes of purple and white as the ender dragon’s body crumbled into ash, the endermen around him screeching in horror. Dream returned to his village a hero only to die later that day from the injuries he’d suffered in battle, the last of his lives crumbling away until his heart went still.

And then, he woke up.

There was a girl standing over him, blonde hair tugged into a messy ponytail. Her eyes the many hues of new spring growth, bright and soft all at once, with a strength hidden behind them. She held a hand down for him.

When their hands met, a green flash sparked between them.

They were one and the same- a soul that had been split into two and given the same power.

Her name was Drista.

The power they held had corrupted their predecessor, the god of Creation, who had fallen into

madness and killed his fellow gods all in his own blinded search for power. A mortal had ultimately been the one to defeat him by driving a diamond sword through his heart, the last of his lives stripped away.

Herobrine, he had called himself.

The gods had convened with the hero who had saved the Realms and came to an agreement. The gods would reincarnate a mortal who had done extraordinary deeds in their lifetime and split their soul into two physical entities hoping that one could save the other if they were ever corrupted. Dream had ultimately been the one chosen. The powers that would have gone to one person were split between the two; Drista was given flight and immunity to physical attacks from mortals, and Dream could create anything he wanted.

And, thus, the two were created amidst a meadow of wildflowers with the promise of a new future lying ahead of them.

Dream had just finished hammering down the last fence post when the wind around him swished. He wipes sweat from his brow. Picking up his tools, Dream heads back towards their house.

“You know, you could at least *try* to act happy that I’m back,” Drista complains once the silence has stretched on too long. She climbed up onto the fence and walked atop it, arms out to balance herself. When Dream still didn’t respond, she pouted. “Fine. I guess I’ll just keep your present.”

“...what present?” Dream stops. Drista hums, spinning so she was walking backward. “The last present you gave me was by surrounding my bed in bedrock and trapping me.”

“It was funny! And that was only because you cut my hair,” she retorts. “I don’t even know if I wanna give it to you anymore. You’re so *mean*.”

“I’ll make you cake when we get home.”

In a blur, something hard was being shoved against his face. Dream eyes the clay mask that had been shoved into his hands. Two black dots stare up at him, a smile drawn for a mouth. “You’re always talking about how much you hate looking like a human and all that, so I made these for us!” Drista holds up a matching mask. She slips the strap around her hair and holds her arms out.

“Drista...” He runs his thumb along the clay, wondering just how long it took her to make this. “C’mere you little brat.” Before Drista could escape, Dream tugs her off the fence and into his arms, squeezing her tight.

“Dream! Let me go you asshole! I can’t breathe!” She screams, kicking her legs when he laughs, a wide smile on her face despite everything. “Do you want to die?!”

Is this the love he had spent his entire mortal life praying for? With Drista around, Dream felt like he didn’t need anything else. Dream finally relents when Drista smacks his chin and releases her. He slips the mask on, taking a moment to adjust to the feeling, the leather strap snug around his head. Once on, Drista gave him two approving thumbs up.

“Now you look really creepy. It suits you.”

Dream grins. “I’m giving you three seconds to get a head start.”

He watched Drista take off towards their cabin, boots leaving imprints in the mud. Dream follows at a much slower pace, relishing the moment. He’d let her win this one. Drista would never let him

live it down, but if it meant she'd kept smiling then nothing else mattered. A love like this was to be cherished for eternity.

Finally, he was home.

"You're the one who defeated Herobrine." Dream says. He watches as the man turns in surprise, his wings fluffing up, hand falling to the sword on his hip, a bundle of blankets in his arm. "I'm Dream- his successor. My sister is here too..." He casts a withering glance around the meadow. "...somewhere."

"Phil. I actually seem to have gotten myself lost," Phil laughs heartily, adjusting the bundle in his grip. "Last time I was here, this place was a desert."

"That was Drista. She has better control over her powers and decided to change the place up." He watches curiously as the blankets squirm, just now realizing something was in them. "What is that?"

"Oh, this?" Gently, he peels back the yellow blanket and tilts it down. Cradled inside was a baby. "Poor guy's an orphan, so I've decided to raise him as my own. Do you want to hold him?"

"...sure." Dream pointedly does not mention that he has never touched a baby in his life. Phil hands the blanket to Dream, instructing him on how to keep his arms and elbows, eventually stepping back. Tiny toes peek from his blanket, dangling in the summer breeze, chubby hands tucked against his fat cheek. His head, a crazy mass of brown curls, wobbles beneath Dream's supporting hand. He can't believe how small new humans are, how vulnerable, how awe-inspiring. "He's..."

"Cute little thing, ain't he?" Phil chuckles. He's so kind it's a wonder that this was the man who defeated Herobrine, ridding the universe of his greed.

"What's his name?"

Phil adjusts the brim of his hat when a particularly large breeze flows past, Dream instinctively tightening his grip on the infant in his arms. "I was just wondering that myself. I wasn't given a name. I've always liked the name Wil, though." Just as Dream begins passing the baby back over to his new father, his eyelids flutter open, a pair of yellow eyes the color of a thousand warm suns, the promise of light for the world. "Well, we should get going soon. I gotta get him somewhere safe."

"You can stay in my Realm." His mouth is moving before his brain could catch up with it. "It's-it's safe, there. I have the End disabled-" *purple flames, the eternal night, endermen screeching, falling in the void for an eternity, no one coming to save him* "-You two could be safe there. The Realm only has three lives, but the other gods don't know it exists and I could even build you two a house. It's the least I could do for you after all you've done."

"Maybe not all gods are bad after all," Phil mutters. Dream is taken aback when a hand settles on his head, the hybrid smiling down at him kindly. "Alright, I'll take your offer. I just need you to do me a favor."

"Anything." Dream says and he means it. He may not have known the man very well, but he had done so many courageous deeds for the universe without wanting anything in return.

"I want you to promise me that he'll be safe in this Realm. There...I know I can't protect him forever, but..." He trails off and stares down at the infant in his arms, eyes full of love and adoration. "Promise me that."

“I promise.”

Dream makes it a goal to check in on the family once every few months.

Phil would see him in the trees and come out after putting Wilbur to sleep, listening as Dream told him his adventures and answered the teen’s questions. In a way, Phil was the father figure that Dream never had. And each visit, Phil gave the same offer, his eyes warm and kind.

“You can stay, you know. You don’t have to always leave,” he’d say, collecting sweet berries while Dream kept an eye out for any lingering mobs, lounging on a branch. “Your sister is welcome to stay as well. I’m sure Wilbur would love having older siblings.”

“We can’t.” Dream said just like he did every time even though, deep down, his heart longed. Phil never pried. He’d just nod and gather his basket, heading back towards the cottage Dream built for them, never venturing past the treeline. Once Wilbur began learning how to walk, he’d be there by the front door waiting for Phil. He’d reach up with his little arms and merrily laugh when Phil scooped him up, curls bouncing with the movement.

When Phil would glance back towards the forest, Dream would be gone.

Drista would argue with him about it each time. Their voices rising above the sacred silence. A glance and one small comment stirred a hurricane of harsh and callous insults. He knew that in very different ways, they both wanted the same thing, but were lost in how to get there, blind to the paths laid ahead of them. They were kids who were given the fate of an entire Realm and there was no one they could turn to for help, for the right answers.

One night, however, must have been the tipping point because the argument went on longer than the others had. The two stood on opposite ends of the meadow, the harsh wind blowing against the tall grass, Drista’s eyes burning with anger.

“You don’t care about me! You never did!” Drista shouted and thunder roared in the distance. Her powers had always derived from her emotions while Dream’s from his consciousness.

“That’s stupid- of course I care! You’re my sister! But we can’t lead normal lives.” Dream’s voice was level, but the anger and hurt in his voice made the walls around them tremble.

“Why?! Why can’t we?!” There were tears streaming down her face. The storm outside had brought rain upon the land.

“Because...” He hesitates, thankful for the mask that hid his tears from his sister. “I’ve had a life before. I know the cruelties of the world. I don’t want you to suffer that.”

Drista stares unwaveringly at Dream before standing. “...you don’t get to make those choices for me.” She whispers, voice cracking halfway through, rushing out of the house before Dream could respond.

He lost half of his soul that night.

On a whim, Dream joined a tournament that a neighboring Realm had been holding.

He hadn’t the faintest idea on how tournaments worked. They gave him a nether star, told him where to wait, and that was it. Now Dream stood in a room lined with weapons for his pickings. He ran his fingers along the table, humming to himself. He eventually picks out an axe, spinning it

around his hand, testing out the weight. Dawning the armor that was placed on a display stance, Dream waits for the round to start.

After the gates lift, Dream stepped out into the arena made of sand and dirt, which was heavily stained with blood from past matches. The audience cheered wildly, even though they had no idea who Dream was. In the center of the ring, he drew his axe, and raised it skyward as his greeting to the gathered thousands.

Next, all attention turned to the other gate that opened. His opponent. He must've been well known because his presence caused a wild response that arose from the audience. *Sapnap* read the assigned name tag that hovered over his head. He was lightly armored, a shield hooked to his arm. He smiled and raised his fishing rod to the sky.

The game-master gave the wave to start, and Dream faced his enemy.

They circled. Sapnap cast the line, clearly planning on closing the distance on his terms, but Dream sidestepped as he backed up. *Missed*. Dream stepped on the hook before he could reel it in, and sped in toward the exposed opponent. Sapnap countered with his sword but Dream brushed it aside with his axe.

He must've known the next thrust would be to his chest, so he pushed his armored shoulder toward the oncoming attack. Dream's blade glanced off the metal armor. Sapnap dropped his sword and grabbed Dream's collar.

"Gotcha," Dream whispers. He watched as his opponent's eyes widened with confusion, and Dream plunged his axe into the bare stomach of his adversary. Sapnap coughed up blood and fell in slow motion.

The silence seemed to stretch on for an eternity until the audience broke out into heavy cheers and applause, Dream standing with blood staining his clothes, his opponent's corpse having despawned leaving nothing but a puddle in the sand and the slightest of imprints.

His head was spinning. The adrenaline still hadn't left him. Fingers twitching against the leather hilt of his axe.

The game-master had come down congratulating him for the win and escorting him out of the arena, but Dream wasn't fully paying attention. Eyes darting about the busy halls as if searching for an unseen adversary who was waiting for an opportunity to strike. He was eventually left in a room that had been created for the winners of the round for them to destress and mentally prepare before they were escorted to the next. Dream heavily sat down on the bench, ignoring the friendly chatter that surrounded him. He couldn't understand how they could be so casual with people they would soon be slaughtering.

Dream took a rag and began scrubbing the blood off his axe- anything to keep himself busy. He didn't even realize someone had stepped in front of him until they cleared his throat.

"Hey, that was a pretty good fight earlier. We'll have to have a rematch sometime." Dream stopped wiping and looked up. Sapnap was smiling down at him, arms crossed over his chest, white bandana tied around his head as dark hair fell over it and over his eyes. He was different from how he had been in the arena. "I'm Sapnap if you didn't know that already."

"I read your nametag," Dream turned down and continued cleaning his axe. Sapnap, undeterred by his standoffish demeanor, took the empty seat beside Dream. "You threw your fishing rod too early. If you had waited for another second, you probably could've gotten me."

“Yeah,” Sapnap lets out a breath of air and leans back, hands gripping the bench under him, legs lifting off the ground. “I didn’t think you’d take my block into account, though. I really thought I had you there.”

“Your stance is too open. It was easy to predict your next move.” Why was he talking to him? *Because you’re lonely*, a little voice inside Dream whispered.

“I just do this mainly for fun. Plus, entertaining the audience is fun.” Against his better judgment, Dream chanced a glance towards Sapnap. “What about you?”

“Fun, I guess. I’ve been...” *lonely, scared, overwhelmed*. “It’s a good outlet.”

“Have you tried manhunt?” Sapnap waves to another player when they leave the room. Dream shakes his head. “It’s where one person tries to ‘beat the game’ that the game-masters have set up, and there are four hunters who try stopping them.”

“That sounds...”

“Fucked up, right?” He laughs, and it's contagious enough that it brings a smile to Dream’s face. “Yeah, but it’s pretty fun. Oh, hey, I think you’re up again.” Sapnap points to the nether star tied around Dream’s neck that was now flashing. “Hey, uh, this is kinda weird, but do you wanna try being friends? You seem like a cool guy and I could use someone to spar with. Maybe we could have a rematch sometime.”

Friends.

Dream couldn’t remember if he had friends before. Drista was his sister and Phil was more of a father figure if anything. The other gods certainly hadn’t been around long for him to develop any meaningful relationships with them. He was going to turn Sapnap down, but when he turned and met his eye, what came out had been the opposite.

“...sure.”

Dream doesn’t remember how he met George.

One day, it had just been him and Sapnap, a duo whose names were feared in Bed Wars and Hunger Games tournaments. Inseparable and ruthless in their pursuit of violence and destruction

Then George was there and he’d become such an integral part of their friendship that the duo became a trio.

They had hit it off immediately. There was something in the way George smiled, a warmth, a genuineness, a softness of spirit he just couldn't pass up. He listened like he was actually absorbing his words, and would even reference things Dream said later on in the conversation. He filled the missing void in their group and was the voice of reason when the two went too far, or the wildcard that would send Dream hurtling over an edge or Sapnap trapped in a hole.

It was odd for Dream to make a connection so fast, let alone two, to give his trust so easily, tentative though it was. Dream could count off all deep and personal relationships he’d developed with people on one hand; Phil and Drista. But then Sapnap and George came hurtling into his life—two humans, wide-eyed and brimming with a hunger for whatever the universe had to offer, and stole away the heart he thought he’d lost years ago.

The more time Dream spent with them, the more his spirit lifted; they were the new friends he'd

needed for so long. The void that had grown in his soul after Drista's disappearance was patched together, held tight by their smiles and laughter.

Dream finally felt like he could live the life he never had.

"Hey, Dream, c'mere a second." George was sitting by the campfire they'd built. A fresh hardcore world had been created, and the three had joined in hopes of sharpening their skills and exploring the untamed lands. Sapnap was struggling with the tents they had brought along, cursing under his breath as he kept slipping in the mud. Dream looks up from his bowl of cream stew, the spoon halfway to his mouth.

"...George, I'm eating."

"You can keep eating! Just come here," with a relenting sigh, Dream got up and sat down beside George, resuming his eating. George moved so he was kneeling behind Dream. The god startled forward when he felt hands in his unkempt hair, spilling some stew onto the fire. "Relax! I'm just gonna braid your hair, dude. I noticed you don't put it up when we fight mobs and it gets in the way a lot. I'm a pro at this."

"I highly doubt that!" Sapnap calls. He managed to get one tent up- rather poorly at that, but it was a start. Dream hesitates. But at George's trembling bottom lip and big puppy-dog eyes, Dream couldn't find it in himself to say no.

"Alright. Just don't pull too hard." He could hear a soft cheer behind him and scoops another spoonful of stew into his mouth. He feels George's fingers card through his hair, undoing the rather poorly done braid he'd put his hair into that morning and loosening a few tangles before subjecting it to a brush. "Where did a brush come from?"

"Stole it from Sapnap's bag," George mumbles, lost in concentration, ignoring Dream's bubbly laughter and Sapnap's sputtering. The blonde strands come out wavy from being held in the style for so long, cascading down his shoulders and back. It felt nice.

The hair that had been secured in the poorly done braid doesn't fight the hairbrush when George starts at the bottom and brushes his way up, but the loose strands closer to his scalp are practically a nest. Yet George is gentle the entire time, working both fingers and brush through the tangles and tugging minimally. As Dream tilts his head back so George can reach better he can't help but let his eyes fall closed.

How long had it been since someone else had brushed his hair? How many years?

Eventually, the hands left. "Alright, I think that should do the trick."

Dream reaches back, shaky fingers feeling along the back of his head. There was one braid running down the middle and two skinnier ones on either side, the rest of his hair George hadn't braided sitting along his back.

"Thanks. I..." His hand fell away. He clutches the empty bowl on his lap, ignoring how his eyes stung. George must have noticed the mood change because he was kneeling beside Dream, a hand on his shoulder, mismatched eyes staring at him in concern. With a sniff, Dream turned so he could make eye contact with George, his mask still pushed up high enough so his mouth was visible, smiling widely. "Thank you."

He didn't know what overcame him, but in the next moment, Dream was diving forward and embracing George, holding him like his life depended on it. Usually, Sapnap and George initiated

the physical affection; an arm over the shoulder, a squeeze of the shoulder, huddling together for warmth in the cold, taking his hand to lead him somewhere. Sapnap soon joined in and unceremoniously fell over the two in a heap of gangly limbs.

Dream let out a content sigh, nestled between his friends, distantly wondering if he deserved this much happiness in his life. When he heard Sapnap and George begin bickering, Sapnap sprawled across Dream's back and George acting as a cushion for both of them, he decided it didn't matter.

It didn't matter if he didn't deserve it- all that mattered was that they kept on smiling. Even if that meant destroying everyone in his path.

Phil had adopted another son.

Dream discovered it when he returned after nearly a decade, deciding to check on the family. He waited in the trees for what felt like an eternity, lazily munching on an apple he picked on the way over, watching the cottage for any new developments. The farm had grown significantly over the years along with their collection of animals, the land overflowing with life.

"We'll be back later, dad!" A boy calls out, swinging the front door open. Dream made the logical assumption that it was Wilbur, his yellow eyes standing out behind a pair of round glasses, wildly untamed hair tucked back in a beanie. "I'll race you to the river!" Before whoever he was talking to could respond, Wilbur was sprinting off, passing by Dream's tree unaware of the god hidden in its leaves.

"Wil!" A new voice, low and gruff, called after him. A pigman came rushing out of the house, following the way Wilbur had gone, his pink hair tied back in a ponytail. Dream dropped his apple. He knew that piglins had some mental capacity, but a *pigman*? Their race had gone nearly extinct after Herobrine's reign and the ones who survived were corrupted by the Nether and became zombified.

That was how Dream found himself following after the two boys, managing to pass by unnoticed by either of them. Wilbur had stopped at a river and was struggling to get his shoes off, nearly hitting his brother in the face with one when he came stumbling out of the bushes.

"Shit, sorry Techno. Don't tell dad I said that," Wilbur rolled up his shorts more then began wading out into the water.

"Whatever," Techno sighs, standing by the water making no move to follow him in. He crossed his arms over his chest, tail nervously flicking from side to side. "Are you sure this is a good idea? Last time you went swimming you got sick and had a fever for days."

"That's because I went out in the cold! And I don't regret it one bit! Come onnnn, it's nice and cool and Dad said it was fine." He made his way back over to the edge and held his arms up. Hesitantly, Techno took his hands and climbed down into the water, breaking out into an immediate squeal and trying to backtrack. "Nope! You're stuck in here forever with me!"

"I hate you!"

They seemed so *normal*. It was like Wilbur didn't care what Techno was, and Techno had always lived on the Overworld. Dream sighs, deciding this was a waste of time, preparing to go visit Phil.

we see you

we thought you'd be sneaker-

Dream whips around. There was no one there. Just the two boys playing in the river, Wilbur splashing his brother with water and laughing at his bewildered reaction, their clothes and hair getting soaked.

we see everything

you can't escape our sight

He knew that gods could communicate telepathically, but if a god had entered his Realm he would have known immediately. There was no plausible way someone slipped by his notice. It just wasn't possible.

blood for the blood god

~~BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD~~

Blood god.

Dream felt his muscles tense up in fear. He'd encountered a servant of the Blood god many years ago on his travels, a pillager who had been obsessed with the ancient prophecies that told of a man who would rise to glory and slaughter the universe all for the Blood god's entertainment. It was how Dream learned of the pigmen extinction and how the Blood god lost its power. When Herobrine died, the piglins were left without a god and began idolizing gold until it sapped away whatever intelligence had survived the zombification. Dream had killed the pillager that same day, hoping he'd finally put an end to the Blood god's reign of terror, worried it might go after his friend.

And now here he was facing what could only be its vassal.

And Techno was looking right at him.

Those red eyes, the color of unspilled blood and of rage, bore straight into Dream's soul. Techno didn't even seem to notice Dream was there, and yet he didn't look away. He stood completely still in the river, the voices' whispers coming from all around Dream, his hand slowly inching towards the dagger that was strapped to his hip. He still hadn't learned to control them.

"Techno! Come on! Dad's gonna be mad if we stay out too long!" Wilbur grabs the boy's hand and tugs him out of the river, stumbling along the bank as he struggles to get his shoes back on. Techno blinked, broken out of whatever trance had taken over him, and robotically helped Wilbur tie his laces. Once Wilbur got his shoes back on he started rushing back home, Techno following after him like a lost puppy back.

Dream stayed in the trees, glued to his spot, heart hammering in what could only be described as fear.

The Blood God had *seen* him. He was on his *Realm*. He was Phil's *son*.

Dream had to kill him.

They had to know.

They *deserved* to know.

Dream kept telling himself this every day, on every adventure, in each fight the three got

themselves in, but each time the words were formed on his tongue he'd see the two- *properly* see them- so naive towards the horrors around them and the monster they'd befriended that it all died in his throat. He spent nights agonizing over the multitudes of scenarios that were conceived in his mind; each one ended with them leaving, their backs the last thing he saw, never able to reach them.

Dream had talked the two into moving onto the Dream SMP with him. That hadn't been very hard; Sapnap missed having a place he could call home and George was an orphan, so all Dream had to do was twist his words a little, enticing the two into the idea of a world all to themselves and all the power that came with it.

Soon enough, they were packing their meager personal belongings and spawning back onto the Realm he hadn't called home in decades, Sapnap picking out a spot for what would become their first real home. It had been made entirely out of bricks with the main floor being crafting tables.

It was absolutely hideous. Dream loved it.

The three had created a *life* together. Rather than waking up alone, Dream woke up to the smell of breakfast and friendly banter, sitting with the two discussing their plans for the day. And when Dream realized that humans required more social interaction rather than just two other people, he allowed more people into his Realm. Soon enough houses were being built along the rolling hills and endless plains, signs of life pulsing in every direction.

But, now, his luck had run out. Dream's duel with Techno was rapidly approaching, and there was no reason (that they knew of) to let him go alone. Dream felt like he was betraying them by holding a secret. He didn't want to be the reason all their hopes were crushed. Gods were the monsters children feared- they were the reason why mankind was given the curse of respawning and spent their lives suffering until they breathed their last breath.

How could Dream tell them that?

"Shit- Dream, run!" George screamed, the horde of mobs hot on their heels and approaching rapidly. Dream's armor was on the verge of breaking and his only weapon was a wooden axe. It had been a simple mining expedition. On the way out, night had fallen, leaving them ripe for the mobs who had come out of hiding. Sapnap had gotten severely injured when a skeleton shot him in the knee and he hit his head on a rock rendering him unconscious. Thankfully, with Dream's abnormal strength, he could carry Sapnap on his back and still sprint, but he couldn't carry two people.

"George, we're not gonna make it!" Dream watched the arrows come zooming past, a couple nicking his cheek or arms before hitting the ground. George was in a worse state, having been the one to save Sapnap and gotten caught in the cross-explosion of a creeper. "We need- we need-" what could they do? Their supplies were limited and even if they hid out for the morning, Sapnap needed immediate medical attention. Dream wishes he'd brought his potion of healing with him.

"Dream, just keep running! I'm gonna try holding them off for you so you can get out of here!"

No.

Dream watches in horror as George stops running and turns, using his shield to hold back a spider that had gotten too close, venom dripping from its fangs and burning holes into the wood, crying out in pain when an arrow hit his shoulder causing his defensive stance to falter.

I won't let you.

With as much care as Dream could muster, he lowered Sapnap's unconscious body off his back onto the grass and turned towards the mobs. He felt the familiar thrum of energy run through his veins as he tapped into his power.

*I'll kill **all** of you.*

The spider managed to knock George's shield away and was moments away from ending his life when a netherite axe came swinging down. The blade sliced through its head like it was jelly and green blood flew everywhere. Dream stepped in front of George and let *Nightmare* rest across his shoulders, a shield strapped to his forearm. His iron armor was replaced by full enchanted netherite, leagues stronger than what any mortal could ever obtain no matter how much they dedicated their lives to it.

"D...Dream..?" Dream turns ever so slightly so he could see George's face. He expected fear, betrayal, any of the above. He hadn't expected him to look worried. For *him*. "What..?"

"Just stay there. I got this." He turns again, charging forward into the mobs. It was all over in a matter of seconds. The mobs didn't stand a chance against him, and when they did land hits his armor would take the damage and throw it right back at them. Dream only stopped once they were all dead. Spawning a potion of health from thin air, Dream sprinted to Sapnap's side, forcing his mouth open so he could drink the glowing liquid, making sure he got every last drop.

"Dream...what-"

"He'll live," Dream quickly interrupted. This wasn't supposed to be how it went. It was supposed to be on *his* terms. He watched as Sapnap's injuries began closing up and stopped bleeding. "I- it was the highest kind there is, so he won't have any long-lasting injuries either. He should be up in a few hours. I have the materials back home to make more if he needs it-"

"Dream, stop," George falls to his knees beside Dream. He was bleeding from the temple and there were venom tracks on his arm, but nothing fatal. Dream instinctively created another potion, practically shoving it down the teen's throat. "Dr- Dream- I'm alright! I'm good! We're safe!"

"This is my fault," he blurts out. George sips at the potion slowly so he didn't choke, the wounds beginning to close up and heal. Dream despawned his armor back whence it came. The guilt was eating away at him slowly. "I- It was my idea that we go mining. For not bringing better gear or potions. If- if I had just told you guys sooner then none of this would've-"

A hand on his cheek made him stop. George carefully turns Dream's head so they were making eye contact, smiling wearily, exhaustion weighing heavy on him. "Dream...I don't care what you are. You *saved* us. If not for you, we all would have died. And I'm sure Sapnap won't care either. Is this why you've been acting so weird lately?"

"Well...I..." Now Dream just felt stupid. He flushed and ducked his head, nervously fiddling with the loose threads of his poncho. He distantly made a note to get new clothes. George's laughter only made his embarrassment worse. "Listen! It's- if you were in my situation, you'd have done the same!"

"I mean, I probably wouldn't have."

"You would! You totally would!" That only made George's laughter worse. He clutches his stomach and doubles over, the absurdity of the situation finally hitting as the adrenaline wore off, tears at the corners of his eyes. Dream smiled. "Sapnap is gonna be pissed."

“Oh, totally. He’s gonna ask you to recreate the entire thing and then ask you constantly for stuff.” George sighed fondly. Dream helps him stand then picks Sappnap up again, making sure they were heading in the right direction. “...you can make us stuff, right?”

“George, that’s cheating. Where’s the fun in that?”

For the first time, Dream wondered if being a god was as horrible as he originally believed it was.

Dream stood atop the rocky surface and exhaled slowly, his breath fanning out from underneath the mask, the snow crunching underneath his boots.

Clouds swirled around him in an icy greeting, so high up that they’d occasionally brush past him as they moved onwards. When he looked down at the dizzying drop, nothing met his gaze but flat clouds, hiding the treasure of the landscape below. From behind, Dream heard a pair of heavy footsteps. They soon stopped leaving the mountaintop in silence, but not in isolation any longer.

“Two months.” Dream says casually. Make small talk. It’s all he was ever good for. The silence from his godly counterpart only urged him forward. “How was the trip? Nice views, I hope. During the summertime, you could see nearly the entire world at this height. Now, though, there are just too many clouds. I think I can make out the lights of a village down there somewhere.”

“...let’s just get this over with.” Techno grunts. Dream smirks, finally turning. The pigman stood with a ruby cape tossed over his shoulders and a flaming sword in hand. He had already fallen into a defensive stance, weighed balanced on each hoof, eyes narrowed.

“Sure, why not. I was getting kinda bored up here anyways,” with a practiced motion, Dream unclips his poncho and lets it get carried off by the wind, phasing his favorite axe, *Nightmare*, into existence, spinning it around a few times just to show off. The eye-roll he got in response made his smile widen. “What? Not impressed?”

“After all the shit I’ve seen? Nothing impresses me anymore.”

“Oh,” now *that* was a challenge. Dream began inching towards Techno, carrying an air of false casualness. “I’m sure I can change that.”

With a strong kickoff, Dream charges in, mask pushed up from the momentum just high enough that his feral grin was visible, axe colliding against the sword halfway, a couple of ripples being sent through the ground sending snow flying up. At such a close range, the flames of Techno’s sword reached for Dream. Sweat dripped down his neck.

“For a god, you’re pretty stupid,” Techno smirked. Before Dream could react, his opponent had swapped his sword into his other hand, slashing at Dream. The burning blade connected with his mask. Dream could feel the wound on his cheek open up only to be cauterized shut by the flames, a piece of his mask cracking off from the impact.

Techno wasn’t necessarily a skilled fighter. He fights like someone who was trained but dropped out halfway, his stances familiar and steady but his attacks loose, reckless, and backed by sheer energy and power but lacking any sense of finesse. What he lacked in technique he made up for in intelligence. Dream could see why the Blood God chose him to be their vassal. They were evenly matched.

His fist connects with Techno’s nose with a sickening crunch, using Techno’s sword as a springboard as he kicks off, the force sending Dream flipping backward. His feet skid against the snow as he lands, hand sliding along the ground to help slow his descent. His hand came away hot,

the palm scorched red and blistered between his fingers, muscles pulsating. Dream panted for air, lungs struggling in the cold climate, his limbs growing heavy in fatigue.

Techno roughly wiped his nose with his thumb, blood splattering against the snow, falling back into a defensive stance. “What? Not gonna blindly charge in this time?” He taunts. Dream stays low to the ground, spitting out blood, one eye visible through the crack made in his mask. He exhales slowly, steadying his breathing.

“...your stance is too wide, and your swings are too heavy. You’ll lose energy quicker that way,” Dream comments. He watches Techno’s ear flick and his eyes widen in confusion. “And try using your feet more. It isn’t good to just stay in one place while your opponent takes stabs at different angles.”

“Are you seriously *lecturing* me during our duel?”

“Well, I was originally planning on killing you and banning you from my Realm,” he lets *Nightmare* disappear and stands, spine popping. “But I decided I’m gonna be your friend instead.”

“I don’t get a choice in the matter, do I?” Techno reaches up and gingerly touches his snout, hissing at the pain, the adrenaline had worn off by now. Dream’s, however, was still pumping. Oh, how *easy* it could be to kill him. Techno was completely defenseless. He wondered how his pulse would feel under his hands, warm and pulsating, watching as the light died from his eyes.

“Nope! Come on, let’s get a fire going and I’ll snap your nose back into place,” with a smile, Dream skipped past Techno, leading him back down the mountain.

Every now and again Dream would leave Techno and return to the SMP, checking in on his friends, helping them with whatever task they had for him.

It felt good knowing he had people to return to- he never had that before. He enjoyed these brief respites of peace, letting himself fall into the false sense of a normal life, forgetting about his doubts and insecurity. And when Dream found himself growing bored and thirsting for blood, he’d rejoin with Techno.

Dream wipes the sweat from his brow and chops down a couple more trees, packing away the logs he’d gathered. Grabbing the rest of his tools, Dream heads back towards the hub. He was planning on expanding the main house to a second floor since it wasn’t just the three of them living there anymore. As Dream neared the hub he noticed a few people gathered along the main road. He didn’t recognize them. Instinctively, he spawned *Nightmare* and put his armor on while keeping the stride up.

“Hey, can I help you guys?” Dream asks. The oldest turns to face Dream. His only belongings were the beanie he wore on his head and the guitar case that was slung over his back. Dream wouldn’t have recognized him if not for those yellow eyes, the smile of a little baby, experiencing the world anew, flashing at the forefront of his mind. Behind him were two teenagers, one a clear mob hybrid who was looking around the field in disdain, the other a ram hybrid who kept fiddling with his sleeves. Dream distantly remembers seeing their faces in Techno’s prized family photo.

“Hi, I’m Wilbur Soot,” Wilbur puts his hand out for Dream, smiling sheepishly. “This is Tommy and Tubbo- my brothers. We were looking for a place to stay. We met uh-”

“Gogy,” Tommy mutters, kicking at the ground.

“*George* said it was alright if we stayed, but I wanted to check in with you first. I kinda assumed

you were the leader or whatever.”

Dream thought back to Phil and how positively he spoke about his family, how his smile would never leave his face when he was around them, of the rare stories Techno told over the campfire about his brothers. He couldn't understand why anyone in their right mind would leave willing. “Of course. Anyone is welcome to stay as long as they want,” he chuckles, shaking Wilbur's hand. He had Phil's smile and his mannerisms. He had Techno's confidence and inner strength. He could be dangerous. “My name's Dream. If you guys ever need anything, feel free to come and ask me. And I'm not the leader- I just help run things.”

“I'll hold you to that,” Wilbur chuckles. Tubbo was taking Tommy's hand and leading the boy away, pointing around the area in an attempt to cheer him up. Dream felt nostalgic when he watched them, remembering how Drista was when they'd created the Realm. She wouldn't stop flying, taking off through the biomes leaving him behind to catch up, exploring every inch of what would be their home.

“There's a good patch of land up southeast from here, if you and your brothers want to build there. Until then, you're welcome to stay here. We have enough food and plenty of beds for the three of you.” He offers- an olive branch. Wilbur seems surprised by this then smiles, relaying the information to his brothers who start running off to explore. “We have community dinners on the weekends-” *protect everyone, keep the happy family, stay together.* “Bad brings muffins.”

“We'll definitely be there then.”

Nodding his head in parting, Dream takes the logs he'd gathered and headed back towards the community house, ignoring the foreboding sense that letting them stay was the wrong call.

“I want to see white flags- white flags outside your base by tomorrow at dawn, or you're dead!”

No one thought he was serious. The war had just been a game to them all. Dream knew better than that. He always knew. He saw the determination in Wilbur's eyes as they stood on the holy land, exchanging words. He was a resilient leader, having faced death in the face multiple times and come back unshaken. He wouldn't back down, but neither would Dream.

This was a war Dream was not willing to lose. They were a threat to the peace he'd built. They were dangerous and blood-thirsty.

He never should have let him stay on his Realm.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?” Sapnap asked, navigating the vast sewer system alongside Dream, a torch in hand that lit up the narrow space. A bag was tossed over his shoulder, carefully kept away from the flames. Dream didn't respond from where he was planting TNT in the stone, fingers dirty with gunpowder. Above them, they could hear the footsteps of the rebels, unaware of the intruders. “I mean, we already have the upper hand. This kinda seems a little excessive.”

Dream stopped.

He could *hear* Sapnap regret his words, a tense silence between the two friends. Dream stood, fists at his sides. Before Sapnap could try taking back what he said, Dream turned and rested a hand on his shoulder. “This is war, Sapnap. I'm just doing what's necessary for the Dream SMP to thrive. Besides,” he laughs and squeezes his shoulder reassuringly. “We're not gonna blow it *all* up. I promise- just enough for a warning.” From behind his back, he crossed his fingers. Dream grabs the cord and begins walking back the way they came.

“Oh!” He could hear Sapnap’s rushed footsteps as he caught up with him. “Well, in that case, that’s not so bad. Those idiots won’t know what hit them.”

Wilbur, however, knew it wasn’t just a warning.

He saw the TNT that Dream had planted and something unsaid was passed between them. “Dream,” even with the odds stacked against him, he never lost his pride, holding himself high as he held his hand out. The rebels stood behind him, their faces ranging from impassive to crushed. “We surrender.”

And then there was *Tommy*. Oh, Tommy. L’manburg’s last hope. A boy who didn’t know the meaning of giving up. A thorn in Dream’s side ever since Wilbur talked him into letting the boy stay after all the chaos he’d created since arriving. An irritating little *bug* he could never flick off.

“You know what?! Let’s fight, Dream. Let’s fight! Right now- right now!” Tommy challenged. He was annoying and brash and would never shut up, but now he was putting aside his selfish desires for the freedom of his people. It was almost adorable. Wilbur had pulled his brother aside and was desperately trying to calm the situation they found themselves in. His lips curled into a wicked grin behind his mask.

“Hmm...” Dream tapped his painted-on mouth in faux thought. Tommy’s jaw tightened. Deep down, he knew that crossing the boy would only upset the blood god once he learned of everything. Maybe even make an enemy out of him. With how strong Techno had gotten over the years and honed his gifts, he knew that in an honest duel against him he’d lose. But when Dream saw how Tommy’s hand quivered, betraying his inner fear and how, for the first time, Wilbur’s collected mask *faltered*, he decided that it was worth the trouble. “Okay. It’s a deal.”

They shook hands.

At sundown, they met. Bows at the ready. Down to half a heart where a single arrow would kill them.

One, two, three, four.

They begin walking. Dream glances to where Sapnap and George were waiting, the two carrying a brave face but clearly worried about him. They were no longer the carefree boys he’d grown up with. They were soldiers. Dream tightened his grip on the bow. He didn’t regret a single decision.

Five, six, seven, eight.

He prepared the arrow, taking in a deep breath to calm his nerves, falling into a blank headspace as the world around him fell away.

Nine, ten.

“Ten paces, go!” Wilbur shouts. Dream spins, aiming towards Tommy, heart hammering in his chest.

Tommy shot first. The arrow whizzed by, too close for comfort, managing to pierce through Dream’s ear before lodging itself into the wooden path behind him. He could feel blood trickle down the side of his face.

Dream watched the horror form on Tommy’s first. He falters.

(“I want you to promise me that he’ll be safe on this Realm...promise me that.”)

“I promise.”)

“I’ll make it painless, at least,” he mutters and releases the arrow. He watches it hit its mark straight into Tommy’s chest, the teen stumbling back a couple of times, collapsing onto the ground as his friends and family come rushing towards him. His body despawned before they could reach him.

[TommyInnit was shot by Dream.]

“Please...Dream...I’ll give you *both* of my discs. That’s what you want, right? In exchange, L’manburg’s independence.” Tommy had begged him once he could walk, hands shaking around the discs he held close to his heart. Dream didn’t understand the sentimental value behind them or why the kid cared so much, but if it meant having leverage then that meant one less problem to worry about. One less bug.

“Alright.”

They shook hands as the sun rose over a new day.

L’manburg raised their flag high again into the sky, celebrating the end of the war.

Dream sat in his room, staring at his enderchest where the discs now laid and would forever lay, the beginning of a plan formulating in his mind.

A throne built from the blood, sweat, and tears of those who had fought for it with all their hearts and soul.

The castle walls were made to protect a family, to echo with laughter, and be the shelter they needed for the years to come. Dream had placed his heart and soul into making the perfect castle, the perfect throne, the perfect crown- all in order for the perfect king.

The perfect servant.

“Eret, from this day forward,” the crown is heavy in Dream’s hands. Eret was known to stand up for those who couldn’t stand up for themselves, to guard them, pay any price. But Dream knew the truth. Deep down, Eret only wanted to succeed in the world he’d created for himself. When the side he’d aligned himself with no longer benefited him or his wants, he’d betrayed them without a moment of hesitation. He never let his emotions get the best of him and was loyal to a fault. He was perfect. “You will hereby be known as the king of the Dream SMP.”

The cheers of their friends and family rang out into the great halls while Dream let the crown settle upon Eret’s head, the rainbow jewels that were encrusted shining under the sunlight basking in through the windows. Dream could *see* the fear that coursed in Eret's veins but never made it to his facial muscles or skin. His complexion remained pale and matte, his eyes as steady as he looked over his people. The perfect puppet.

Dream brought his hand up to rest on Eret’s shoulder. Only then did his fear show, the slightest of flinches, quickly reigning his emotions inwards once more.

They both knew that having a king was just for show.

Eret had no real power.

He could build what he wanted, flaunt his newfound wealth and riches, fulfill his heart’s desire, but

it would always be Dream who controlled everything; it was Dream who made the knights, Dream who created the policies, Dream who brought an end to the war.

He glanced over to where George and Sapnap were celebrating, the rest of their friends gathered around them. They had put the past behind them and were looking towards the future of a new era, smiles bright, shoulders no longer carrying the tension of war.

It was all for them. All for them.

Dream walked along the railroad Tommy had been building.

It was rather ugly. It didn't lead anywhere useful, either. But Dream found himself traveling it anyway, hands in his pockets, enjoying the seaside breeze. After the war for L'manburg, peace had once again fallen over the Realm. They opened trade with the new nation, discussed new policies, and wrote up treaties. Things were finally looking up.

So deep in thought, Dream didn't hear the shrill screams. He only realized something was wrong when the rails began shaking. He didn't know much about redstone and minecarts, but he knew the powered rails shouldn't be glowing for no reason.

"DREAM!!" Tommy's panicked voice finally reached Dream. He turned and saw a minecart racing down the tracks in his peripheral vision, Tommy inside desperately pulling at the levers for it to stop, heart stuttering in his chest.

He couldn't get out of the way in time.

Dream felt the ground disappear from underneath him.

One moment he was hurtling through the air, and in the next, he was colliding with the ocean, the waves splashing up around him.

A sense of anguish, more so than the pain, had taken control of his heart, and he became extremely light-headed. Dream opened his mouth to let out a scream, but all that came out was a string of bubbles. Despair filled him with every struggling gulp.

Icy cold water was thrust up his nostrils, a stream of water cascading into the back of his throat and nose, sending jets of pain throughout his entire body. Slowly, the commotion and chaotic sounds of the ocean drowned out to a low hum, buzzing at his ears, gradually muting into silence.

He gave up on the screaming, on the thrashing, allowing the water to hold his body in a sustained position beneath the sea, the seaweed forming his grave. As his vision blurred out and his consciousness faltered, his body became numb and he was forced into waiting for the hands of death to suck away every last piece of life left in him.

Maybe the upper content of his head was little more than a spiral of thread, which was slowly turning as it unraveled. One more tug and the final strand would come undone allowing his mind to slip through the gap, and float slowly up and away.

Maybe, if he lost his mind, he could escape the nightmares that plagued him.

He felt like a child again, held down in a bed dying from wounds the ender dragon had left him with, the clerics only able to watch in horror. He just wanted to be saved- wanted a rescuing hand to tow him back to life, to the world he knew, hold him in a safe embrace, and whisper *everything is alright*.

But it never came.

Dream woke up back home. His heart was pounding, his mind empty. Adrenaline still pulsed through his veins, eyes darting about taking in his surroundings, fingers curling into the sheets below him, tears getting stuck in his lashes. Immediately, Dream recreated his mask and shoved it onto his face, sobs getting stuck in his throat.

He promised himself he would never die again.

He was the puppet master. They were his puppets, and Wilbur was by far his favorite.

A few stolen items there, some vandalization here, and a civil war was born. L'manburg had been so *easy* to crack. The scars of Eret's betrayal had left them paranoid. They were a balloon overfilled with water just waiting to burst. Dream simply popped it. Wilbur, determined to maintain his power, initiated a presidential election with Tommy as his running mate. It was a clever plan; they would close the ballot before anyone else entered leaving them the only ones the citizens could vote for.

They probably would have won.

"Yeah, I heard L'manburg is having an election or something," Dream says, having been out collecting wood with Sarnap and the newest addition to the Realm; Quackity. "But I don't know who's running other than Wilbur. He's got Tommy as his running mate too."

"Really, he's the only one who *could* run. Fundy and Tubbo are..." Sarnap trails off. Dream knew Quackity was idealistic, having joined for a new start and hungry for power. President was his perfect opportunity. And when the duck hybrid came up to them, asking where L'manburg was, Dream had just pointed in a direction and watched the bricks fall into place.

SWAG2020 versus POG2020.

Quackity versus Wilbur.

Dream resided in the shadows, stepping in when necessary, playing the devil's advocate when bias became prominent, plotting when everyone's backs were turned.

He never gave his endorsement.

The rally was when Dream decided to stir the pot again, bringing his king into play.

"You know what, I'll run for my own presidency. Yeah- yeah, that's what I'll do! SCHLATT2020 baby!" Schlatt shouted, his voice booming from the podium, horns forming a massive crown around his head. Dream smiled where he sat. And in a sea of appalled faces, Dream was the only one who clapped, meeting Schlatt's eye.

"Dream, are you sure you can't endorse Quackity?" George asked him once Schlatt was escorted off the podium and the rally was put on hold. Tubbo had begun telling bad jokes in hopes of fixing the situation. "He's got a lot of good ideas for the nation. We even fought a war against Wilbur. And Schlatt is..." He glances towards the podium where Schlatt was drinking from a flask.

"There's nothing I can do, George," Dream sighed. He hated seeing his friends distressed, but he had to. He had to. This was all for them. "I'm sorry, but I'm endorsing Schlatt."

When Wilbur and Tommy were exiled from the nation they'd built, Dream passively watched from

his tower. He was a front-row witness to the killing blow that took Wilbur's second life, his body crashing into a river, blood turning the crystal clear water a dark red. Punz glanced up to where Dream was watching, making brief eye contact then turning away, allowing Schlatt to praise him for a job well done.

He never realized that Punz hadn't been shooting on Schlatt's order.

It didn't matter who died in the process.

He simply pulled the strings.

Dream reminded himself that things would only get better once the storm passed. That this was all leading up to something great. That Drista would be proud of him. That he hadn't broken his promise to Phil. That his friendship with George and Sappan wasn't becoming strained.

The emptiness in his soul grew.

Two weeks after their exile, Dream sensed another person enter the Realm.

It only took him a week to track him down.

Dream climbed down from his tree and readjusted the hood over his head. Techno's ear flicked and cast his net into the water, wiping sweat from his forehead, curly tail swaying behind him. His ruby cape was draped over a skeleton horse nearby, the crown he'd won from his first-ever tournament proudly sitting atop his head. His hair had grown somewhat, reaching his shoulders with a single braid framing the side of his face. "I never took you for a fisher."

"I didn't think you cared about politics, and here we are." Techno shot back instantly. There was an unfamiliar bite to his words. He didn't understand what he did wrong.

"I don't," Dream frowns. "I thought you knew me better than that."

Techno spun around. His eyes were glowing and his hand fell to his hip where his sword was sheathed. "Yeah, well, that was before you watched my brothers get exiled and *murdered*."

"Hey, look, I know you're angry, but I'm not your enemy." Dream holds his hands up passively, letting Techno give him a quick once over, having shown up without any weapons on his person. He easily *could* phase in a weapon, but it was thought that mattered. "I'm actually against Schlatt and I support Pogtopia, but I can only work from the shadows."

"Why? You're a god? You endorsed Schlatt," Techno narrows his eyes.

"It's...complicated. Everything that's happening now is happening for a reason. It will all make sense eventually. I never knew he'd go this far. The reason I came is that I have supplies for your rebellion if you need them. Gapples and such." Making sure Techno could see his every movement, Dream materializes a bag, holding it open showing the ender pearls and golden apples stuffed inside and blaze rods. "No armor or weapons, but these will definitely help."

"You're so fucking confusing sometimes..." Techno grumbles, but relents and snatches the bag out of Dream's grip, rolling his eyes when Dream throws his hands up in fake surrender. He turns and begins reeling back in his net. Dream sits down beside the river. Neither speaks.

It was almost nostalgic; reminiscent of the days when Dream would build their camp for the night and Techno hunted down dinner. On good occasions, Techno would tell stories of his childhood;

sparring with Wilbur, farming with Phil, teaching Tommy how to ride a horse.

Things had been easier then. Just two gods ignoring the weight of their responsibilities as they ate badly cooked food and laughed as friends did. He almost missed it.

Dream tilts his head up so he could watch the blood god pick through the fish he'd caught, the smaller ones being let back into the water while the bigger ones were stashed away. "I don't really know what you're working towards," Techno begins. "I don't really care, and I don't plan on staying here long. I just want you to understand one thing."

"Which is?" Dream passively watches Techno draw his sword. The tip is brought just under his chin, the sharp edge inches from his soft skin. Techno's eyes hold no mercy, but deep down Dream saw *anger*. They hadn't fought in years and Dream was curious to see just how stronger he'd gotten.

He wondered how far he could push Techno until he tipped over the edge.

"I don't care if you're a god. I don't care if you could sweet talk the entire *server* onto your side. If you ever *dare* hurt my family again, I will *kill you*. If you run, I will hunt you down to the ends of the universe. From this moment onwards, they are *off-limits*. Keep them out of your sick games."

Dream smiles wide enough so that his mouth could be seen, grabbing the sword in his hand. He squeezes until his hand stings and his own blood comes dripping down onto the grass. "Techno," his voice is sickly sweet, dripping with fake hurt. Dream tightens his grip on the sword. Distantly, Dream realizes that getting one's hand sliced open should hurt. He couldn't feel anything. "Are you *threatening* me?"

Techno tightens his grip on the sword. Dream could hear the voices now. They had always hated him. "That depends entirely on you."

"I guess we'll have to see, huh?"

After what felt like an eternity, Techno let out a slow controlled breath and sheathed the sword. He gave his shoulders a wiggle and lolled his head in a circle. It was a decent effort, enough to fool anyone, but Dream knew better. He was a walking definition for tension. His eyes moved with the alertness that comes from heavy stress and his hands remained clenched by subconscious demand.

Dream saw how Techno was barely restraining himself, knowing that this was the god's playing field where he had free reign and that starting a fight now would put himself at a disadvantage.

"Thanks for the supplies. I don't really care where it comes from, but I won't tell the others- I doubt they'd care though as long as it's not from that Eret guy or Manburg," Techno unties the skeleton horse that had been waiting for him by a tree and gives its muzzle a couple of friendly pets. He clips his cape back on and hooks his bags to the saddle hooks. Dream stands but stays by the river. "Bye."

"Just one last warning," Dream hums, crossing his arms behind his back, tilting his head, and smiling cheerfully. Techno climbs up onto the horse and gives him a glare. "I'd keep an eye on Wilbur if I were you."

Techno doesn't grant Dream a reply. He grabs the reins and rides off through the forest towards Pogtopia, his figure disappearing in the trees. Dream's smile drops the moment Techno is far enough.

His injured hand twitches by his side, his blood staining the grass. He still felt nothing.

Mankind never changed.

Dream had accepted that harsh reality decades ago, but Techno hadn't. Not until now.

Techno was frozen beside Dream. The veins in his arms and neck were glowing a vibrant red, pupils enlarging out of bloodlust, instinctively shifting to his natural pigman form.

This wasn't his friend. This was the Blood god and he was *pissed*.

Dream very calmly took a step to the side. Once Techno lost control, it didn't matter who was in front of him- he'd cut down everyone in the way. The only other time Dream had witnessed this was during Techno's first war. He had been so drunk off the adrenaline, the blood getting to his head, that Dream nearly lost his arm trying to calm him down.

"I lied. There was a traitor." Dream says staring down the teenager, feeling a spark of joy ripple through him as fear overtook his face. Schlatt fleeing during battle and dying of a heart attack hadn't been his plan at all, but it had given Wilbur the last push and that's what mattered. He didn't care about how they got there. Everything had led up to this moment. Dream watched Techno through the corner of his vision, the pigman slipping away towards the presidential podium, only one thing on his mind.

He hums. All the L'manburgians stopped their preemptive celebration, having noticed their leader's disappearance. Niki rushed back towards the group screaming. She must have figured out Wilbur's plan. But it was too late. "It was Wilbur."

All at once, the TNT beneath their feet went off.

Dream tossed an ender pearl just in time so the explosion only caught the tail of his cloak, falling into a crouching position alongside his allies a good distance away from the blast radius. Absolute disarray had descended upon the nation, voices that had been cheering screamed into the sky, countless bodies blowing up until there was nothing left as a great ravine opened up over the land.

Dream stood, feeling the adrenaline rush through him at the sight.

"FINALLY! L'MANBURG FALLS TODAY!"

He screamed over the deafening booms, holding his arms out and basking in the destruction. The SMP knights charged in once the explosions had stopped, taking advantage of their enemies, cutting down anyone who'd survived.

Just when Dream thought it couldn't get better, he heard the Blood God shout.

Techno stood across Tommy and Tubbo with a chasm separating them. It was rather poetic. Tommy had tears streaming down his face as he tried to reason with his brother. But it was too late. He pointed his sword at them and yelled something before turning. Six wither skeleton skulls were placed atop the soul sand, bringing the withers to life, raining down destruction, Punz added more TNT along the battlefield, blowing up what Wilbur- his *vassal* - hadn't.

Dream turned his gaze back towards the podium which had crumbled away revealing Wilbur's bunker. The man was clutched in his father's arms, a diamond sword driven into his gut, his reign of terror finally ended. He didn't know how Phil knew, but soon enough the winged man was staring straight towards him, tears streaming down his cheeks, his son's blood staining his clothes.

(*"Maybe not all gods are bad after all."*)

Was Dream the villain in this story?

He stared at the battlefield, watching the one peaceful nation crumble into a shadow of what it had once been.

No- no, he wasn't the villain. *They* were the villains. They who tried to destroy everything he'd built, who tore away from their happy family and let themselves get corrupted by the world.

Dream laughed and laughed and *laughed*. The seeds he'd sown years ago had finally come to fruition. Wilbur was dead, L'manburg would be nothing more than ruin, and they'd all realize he was right. Dream was aware of Sapnap's lingering gaze on his back. Was he proud? He couldn't wait to tell George the good news.

Phasing *Nightmare* into his hand, Dream slid down the hill and joined the fray, feeling blood splatter onto his face as he cut down everyone in front of him, countless death alerts flashing in front of his eyes.

It was *beautiful*.

Tubbo was a good president.

He was young, but no matter the situation or his own opinions he always followed what he believed in; upholding the laws of his nation. It was admirable. It reminded Dream of Wilbur before everything. When things were simpler times; when they had been *friends* so many years ago.

The reconstruction of New L'manburg was a slow and excruciating process, but under Tubbo's kind leadership everyone chipped in. Dream donned the mask once again and donated supplies to their cause, having shaken hands with Tubbo once the smoke died down, the boy blind to the god's hand in everything. The nation was young and desperately needed allies lest another war started.

Dream sat atop a hill overlooking the Dream SMP and New L'manburg, his legs hanging over the edge, his patched-up mask covering his face. He heard footsteps come up behind him, a blur of blonde hair and blue overalls settling down onto the space beside him.

"Still wearing that dumb mask I made you, huh?" Whereas Dream had changed drastically, Drista looked just the same as he remembered. She was much shorter than him now, head just barely reaching his shoulder, colorful band-aids covering her arms and legs, a matching mask pushed to the side of her head leaving her face visible. There was a metaphor in there somewhere. Dream was too tired to care. "Is this really what you want?"

"They aren't grateful. Everything I do is never enough. It's- mankind is *corrupt*, and it will never change. I just- I just want to have my family back and for everyone to be happy, but with them around it will never be the same," Dream sighs. He stares into the distance feeling the wind blow his hood back. Drista hums, leaning back on her hands, kicking her legs. "Techno- he isn't seeing the full picture, but I know he will eventually. He has to... Wilbur did. He saw it- he knew, and that's why I gave him the TNT. It was the only way."

"But is it?" She tilts her head up. The girl who once chased him around the cabin with a fork, the girl who was afraid of thunderstorms and would silently climb into his bed at night for comfort, the girl who worried about if her tamed wolf was lonely while she was off practicing her powers, was gone.

Dream had lived so long in denial, afraid of the heartache it would bring him, that now he felt

nothing. His sister was gone. The real Drista might've still been alive somewhere in the universe, but his *sister* was dead. He could never make up for the missed time. A part of Dream wondered if he'd ever do things differently. Deep down he knew he wouldn't have.

"It is..." He whispers, no longer sure who he was trying to reassure. His fingers curl into the grass. "Herobrine, he wanted to destroy the universe, right?"

Drista shrugs. "Something like that I think. I never really paid attention. You were always better at remembering that stuff."

"Well..." Dream glances towards the sky. He knew Drista wasn't there- that it was all in his head. It didn't matter anymore. "Maybe he was onto something."

Everything was going wrong.

"Do you even care about us?! Did you ever?!" Sappnap shouted, eyes red and puffy from crying, fists at his sides. He knew instantly from the way Dream flinched that his words hit their mark.

Dream couldn't believe what he was hearing. "Of *course* I care about you guys. We're a family."

"We're just pawns to you," George spoke up quietly. In that instant, their relationship shattered into shards. Nothing would ever be the same again. Dream kept his axe against Quackity's throat, pressing until there was a nice red line running across the skin. George stepped in front of Quackity and the axe. Sappnap quickly took up space next to George, unsheathing his sword and shield to protect them in case it came down to it, the three standing opposite Dream.

"No! You're my *friends*!" Dream insists. They had to understand. He steps forward. The three step back. He ran a hand back through his hair tugging *hard*. *Don't hurt them. They just are confused. They don't understand.* "Why- why can't you *understand*? Everything- it's all been for you guys!"

"It's for yourself!" Tears are streaming down his face now. Dream meets his eye. George is trembling in his skin but stubbornly holding his ground. "Everything- it was all just some *game* to you."

"You said it yourself, Dream. You only care about power," Sappnap whispers, the anger barely restrained in his voice. "We aren't your friends anymore. From here on out, we are enemies."

"Guys..." And he *laughs* because it was all just so *hilarious*. This had to just be some elaborate prank. But the stares never faltered and the weapons never lowered.

Dream watched the three leave, their backs haunting the corners of his mind, left alone.

Just why couldn't they see? Everything he did was for them. Every person he killed, every war he waged, every explosive he set off- it was all so they could keep on smiling. He didn't have a *choice*. He knew just how cruel the world could be. His job was to protect them.

He had to. He *had* to.

"...*you don't get to make those choices for me.*"

The walk home is a blur.

Once Dream steps into the house he manifests *Nightmare*, swinging it across the photos that were

pinned fondly on the wall over the years. He watches how the framed ones shatter against the ground and scatter shattered glass everywhere, how the loose ones tear and rip until they could never be pieced together again. His face is scratched out in every single one.

They didn't care. They *never* cared. Dream did *everything* for them and this is how they repaid him? He fought and betrayed and *killed* and they turned their back on him.

Dream swings again and again.

He said he would protect and that's what he did. It was them, not him.

The walls were scored so deep with blade marks the outside world could be seen through the cracks. He swings, the world around him becoming nothing more than a blur. He swings the axe one last time with a singing arc through the air, sparks flash as it meets wood, splinters flying upwards.

Dream breathes hard, sweat dripping down his neck, standing in the center of his destruction. His hair came falling over his shoulders and with it all the memories came. He *hated* the memories. They made him weak. They made him *human*. He stormed through the house until he reached the bathroom. *Nightmare* turns into a pair of stainless scissors. He aggressively bunched all of his thick overgrown hair within one of his hands, raising his scissors to the base of his neck, staring at himself in the mirror that hung on the wall.

Maintaining eye contact with his reflection, Dream began hacking at his hair for what felt like an eternity, watching the shell of the man he once was now dead, blond hair falling around his feet on the ground.

Snip.

("Dream!" Drista screams. She hid behind a table when Dream threw more flour at her. "This is totally unfair!" He climbed up onto the table preparing to dump the rest of the flour onto her. In his eagerness, Drista had grabbed the bowl of batter, an evil grin on her face. "Gotcha!" It was Dream's turn to begin shouting as Drista threw batter at him. The two ended up using most of their ingredients in the food fight rather than the actual cake they had been baking together.)

Snip.

("George!" Dream wheezes. He clung onto George's hands for dear life, legs shaking, eyes darting from the ice below them to his friend's face. George was doing a poor job at stifling his laughter. "Stop laughing! This was a horrible idea- I never should have agreed to this!" He tried taking a step forward but slipped on the ice. Dream screamed as he came crashing into George causing them both to lose balance and fall over in a heap of limbs.)

Snip.

("This is nice," Sappnap sighs. He lays back on the grass, arms crossed behind his head, the night sky and its stars being reflected in his eyes, a small content smile on his face. "Like, really nice. I never thought I'd have another home again after I left, but," he turns so he's facing Dream. The corners of his eyes crinkle as his smile lifts. "I'm really glad I did though because I got to meet you guys! Now I've got a family of my own.")

When Dream is finally done he drops the scissors, listening to them clatter against the tile and despawn, leaning closer towards the mirror. There was blood rolling down his neck from all the cuts he'd managed to give himself from his careless hacks. His hair was the shortest it'd ever been,

uneven on every side, his blood-smearred along the locks turning them a darker shade. Erratic and rough. He grinned.

Dream reached into his pocket, pulling out a flint 'n' steel. It took a few tries until it ignited, orange and red flames bursting forth, grasping at the air. He finally understood Wilbur's obsession. Fire made everything easier- *simple*. Dream liked simple. He carelessly drops the flint 'n' steel onto the hair, watching them become kindling and shrivel up, the fire spreading rapidly along the walls. This wasn't his home anymore- it never had been.

Dream left the bathroom whistling a tune he'd made up, the fire close on his heels. He left the house behind him. Flames engulfed the cottage and singed the nearby trees. A large puff of smoke rose up into the night sky. He kept his eyes facing forward rather than behind, Dream's mindset with a goal.

The god of Creation died that night.

The god of Chaos was born.

Later that evening, when the house was nothing but ashes, a ghost came wandering inside, pushing through the debris searching for anything that survived. He stopped when he found a photo that hadn't been destroyed in the rampage. It must've been taken years before the three had come to the Dream SMP.

Dream was standing behind George and Sapnap with his arms tossed over their shoulders, the photo charred where his face would be, George's goggles skewed and smiling sheepishly, Sapnap hugging Dream back and his face blurred from moving so much when it got taken. Ghostbur smiles wistfully. Clutching the picture as if it was the most precious thing in the world, he left, holding onto the hope that Dream wasn't too far gone.

Chapter End Notes

Phew! This one took me awhile. I went through like 3 revisions but here it is! I hope you guys enjoyed! Let me know in the comments your thoughts, predications, questions, etc etc. I love hearing feedback! I'm very excited for the next chapter, and I hope you guys are enjoying the fic so far!!

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Also feel free to check out my Twitter! I mostly retweet a lot of art and memes, but I post updates on my fics and sometimes little previews of what's coming up!

[Twitter](#)

Hope

Chapter Summary

When Techno looks up Phil's smile has turned sad, eyes glossy with unfallen tears.

"You sound like Wil," he chuckles and wipes his eyes. "But, yeah. Yeah, that...it won't be easy."

"No, it won't."

"But our family has never been easy." At that, Techno smiles.

Chapter Notes

WOOOOOOOOOO!!!! LAST CHAPTER BOYS!!!! thank you so so SO much for sticking around for the journey and to all new readers, hello!! i hope you have enjoyed my mess of an au so far!!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur lies in the faint sunbeams that glittered through the open cave, utterly still, eyes half open as if admiring the sky one last time.

A pool of dried blood outlines his body in crimson and soaks the rocks below. His hair lays scattered around his head like a dark halo and coated in dirt turning it a blackish tint. As Dream approaches, the gravel crunching beneath his boots, a cursory glance is enough to know he is dead. To be quite honest, Dream didn't think Phil had it in him.

Dream kneels beside the corpse. He doubted Wilbur would ever be buried. He had been L'manburg's scapegoat- a name that will be passed down through history as a villain and used to persuade future children of the nation into behaving. In his final moments, Wilbur had truly been alone.

"Was having a father worth it? Did it make dying easier knowing he was the one doing it?" Dream asks. He chuckles and clutches his face. "Look at me- talking to a dead man. Maybe George is right, maybe I am working myself too hard." Dream peeks through his fingers. As expected, Wilbur hasn't moved, his hand still clutching onto a torn piece of L'manburg's original flag, eyes reflecting the clouds that meander past.

He could almost trick himself into seeing the man before the madness. The son with a laugh so bright and an unwritten future lying ahead of him. The brother who would play music to the village children and sit in the sheep pens reading books. The friend who brought a smile on everyone's face and helped teach the others how to brew potions. The leader who created a nation out of pure determination alone and struck hope into the hearts of any who followed him.

"Three, two, one! Great job you guys!" A tattered flag is raised by the rebels who survived the war.

Tubbo stood on the sidelines, leading the nation's restoration once he had recovered enough. Maybe Wilbur, deep down, still harbored love towards the nation he had given life to and hoped it would prosper even after his final goodbyes. Tubbo was barely going on seventeen- still very much a boy who had much to await in life. And yet he was the worthiest candidate out of the rebels to lead.

The teen however was on his last life and still heavily injured after the war. Killing him would be child's play. Dream could watch the nation crumble into nothing just as he had originally set out to do. He'd be in and out before anyone could realize what was happening.

But then he watched Tommy come up beside Tubbo. His arm was in a cast and he still carried the scars Techno's withers left him, but the fire in his eyes hadn't been snuffed out. The two brothers were smiling despite all the horrors they had gone through. They were both embodiments of Wilbur's original beliefs, and together the nation would become prosperous.

Dream turns towards Wilbur again. He lays his hand over the large gash in his chest. The wound ran straight through his kidney, puncturing the diaphragm, and into the lungs. Phil clearly had wanted to give his son a quick death. Dream doubted Wilbur felt much pain either; his body would have fallen into shock after the lack of oxygen before his heart stopped.

"He just always has to play the hero, huh?" Dream sighs, pulling his hand back now stained with blood. He reaches into his pocket pulling out a totem of undying. "At least, this time, he can't ruin my plans."

Dream breaks the totem in half. A cloud of emerald and gold explode inside the cave. Dream feels the onslaught of magic blow back his hood and ripple through his hair, circling around the two of them, nearly blinding him with how *bright* it all was. Using a totem on a fully dead mortal was a taboo in the Realms, and even banned on some of the worlds Dream visited. It was how he learned the process was even possible. If another mortal brought them back it would require them to sacrifice a life of their own, and when they returned they'd have no memories of their previous life.

The process had never been attempted by a god before.

He lays the broken totem atop Wilbur's body watching the magic hone in on him. For what feels like an eternity, nothing happens. Dream reaches into his pocket preparing to break another totem. He'd break a hundred until this worked. Suddenly all the lights disappeared. Wilbur's corpse still laid in front of Dream with just a couple sparkles glinting off his clothes.

That's when he saw *him*.

"Um, excuse me, but where am I?" A man stood across from Dream. He wore an oversized yellow sweater with sleeves that went past his hands and a beanie. His skin was pale, and when the light hit him a certain way Dream could see it was transparent. The most distinct feature was his eyes- they were pure grey. He had no pupils, no iris- just two grey circles plastered onto his sclera. He stares at Dream with his dull eyes and tilts his head. "Wait...I...you look familiar..."

"Wilbur?" Dream blinks.

"I'm not Wilbur," and there it was. "Or, at least, I don't *think* I am. I don't...quite remember..." He holds his hands up to his face, turning them over a few times.

"This will have to do..." He gets to his feet and dusts leftover gunpowder off his pants. "Come on, Wil. You have some... *friends* to see. They have missed you *very* much." Oh, he just couldn't *wait*

to see their faces.

“Friends...friends...” The ghost doesn’t seem to have heard Dream. He was in a completely different headspace, eyes staring out into the distance past the god, a hundred different emotions crossing his face. “You...are a friend. I...I think I remember that...”

“Uh, yes! Yes, we were *very* good friends, Wil. I...I was really upset when I heard you died. But it’s okay now! You’re back, so let’s go see the others-”

“I was your vassal.” Something in the ghost shifted. “You...you gave me TNT. I...I had to blow it all up. I...I hurt so many people...” Dream watches yellow begin bleeding into his eyes like a drop of paint in water. “You *tricked me*. ” He was *remembering*. He wasn’t supposed to do that.

“No- no, that wasn’t you,” Dream chuckles stepping around the corpse. He sets a hand on the ghost’s shoulder. “You didn’t blow everything up.”

“I...I didn’t?” He blinks and turns to Dream. He looked so *confused* and *innocent*. He wasn’t the man who had fought valiantly in a war for the freedom of his people or the maniac who had lost all hope and followed the promises of a god in his most vulnerable moments. This was just a child who carried the memories of a life that hadn’t been his own. Dream grins.

“No, that was Alivebur. You, my friend, are Ghostbur! You see, you’re the spirit of hope! That’s why I brought you back. L’manburg needs you- your loved ones need you.” Ghostbur relaxes at the honeyed words, his eyes losing their color again, the tension leaving him.

“Oh...I- I can do that! Is...is Tommy here? We- we like Tommy. And Tubbo! Tubbox. And- and Techno and Dadza! Are- are they all here?” Dream steps over Wilbur’s corpse. He glances over his shoulder and watches the ghost eagerly follow him out of the cave. “Can I see them?”

“Of course, Ghostbur.”

Techno looks up from his book. Phil stands at his door with a sullen expression and his bucket hat in his hands. When Techno gestures for him to come in Phil shakes the snow off his wings, hanging his coat up on the hook. Techno sets his book aside and gets up to help Phil sit down, ignoring how his father chuckles. “Techno, I’m alright. It was just a long flight. I’m not used to going long distances anymore.”

“Phil-” Techno swallows. He has so many questions, and he knew Phil would only give him so many answers. It was for his own good after all. Techno had just begun settling into retirement. “What happened? Why did you come in such a rush? You weren’t supposed to arrive for another two days.”

“Can’t give your old man a break, huh?” Phil sighs fondly. Techno brings his chair up so he’s sitting in front of Phil. He turns his hat over in his hands, chewing on his bottom lip. “...Tommy was exiled.”

“I saw that coming,” Techno snorts. At the sharp look he gets, he clears his throat. “Sorry. Continue.”

“He...I don’t know all the details, but it was Tubbo who had made the ultimate decision,” he pauses. Techno hesitates then reaches over to grasp Phil’s hand giving it a couple reassuring squeezes. “I...something is happening, Techno. I can feel it.”

“Another war?” Because it was *always* war. Governments brought war. Tyrants brought war. A

power imbalance brought war. No matter where Techno went, a war soon followed, sweeping the land until nothing was left.

“I don’t know. I...Tubbo is a good kid, but he’s been...different. His cabinet is bloodthirsty, and they each have different ideas for the nation. Techno, you need to find Tommy.”

“Dad, you know he hates me now,” Techno glances away. He stares into the fireplace watching the blaze consume the logs. He needs to add more. “I killed his brother, and I nearly killed him with the withers. You should see him.”

“He hates me too,” Phil chuckles humorlessly. Techno tenses. It had taken him *weeks* to finally be able to look his father in the eye after watching him kill Wilbur. Even now he saw flashes of blood splattered across his tunic, a bloodied diamond sword in his hand. “I...I haven’t been a good father.”

“That’s not true-”

“No, it is. I never visited after they left, and I never realized just how bad everything had gotten until it was too late. You know what the worst part is? I...I don’t even remember what Wil and I’s argument that night was about anymore. I...” Wordlessly, Techno shuffles to the edge of his seat and pulls Phil into a hug. He feels Phil clutch onto his back and silently cries into his shoulder. “I didn’t want to kill him...”

“I know.” Techno stares up at the ceiling. Wilbur would’ve liked it here. He always had been a fan of the cold. He’d wear his favorite yellow sweater and drag Techno out into the snow, cheeks, and nose a bright pink, snowflakes kissing his lashes. They would make snow angels and snowmen of their family in the backyard before rushing back into the house for dinner. When Tommy joined the family, they had snowball fights. At night they would cuddle in front of the fire wrapped in blankets with cups of hot cocoa while Wilbur played guitar for them. “I know, dad. I miss him too.”

“Ghostbur went with Tommy.” Phil mumbles. Techno tenses. “He...I know he isn’t Wi but...he’s all I have left. He visits me every day, you know? He helped build my house. He...his memory is getting worse, Techno. I’m worried I’m going to lose all of them...”

“That...” He wants to tell him that it won’t happen- that everything will work out in the end. It would be a lie. Tubbo and Tommy might never reconcile after everything that had happened, and Ghostbur would never be Wilbur. “I’ll go see Tommy tomorrow. The...I don’t know how, but Chat can communicate with Ghostbur. He can tell me where they are.”

Phil pulls back and settles into the chair with a sign. Techno gets up deciding to make himself busy rather than focusing on the issues at hand. He adds a couple more logs into the fireplace then steps to the mini kitchenette, making two mugs of hot chocolate. “You named them?”

“We’ve...it’s kinda hard to explain,” Techno replied. He added a good amount of marshmallows into Phil’s cup before heading back. “Retirement doesn’t suit them. Some days are worse than others. But I think we’ve come to an understanding of sorts.”

“What are they saying now?” Phil mumbles his gratitude and takes the mug.

“E.” Techno says dryly. He sips his drink.

that is not what we have said

EEEEEEEEEEEE/HAKE/EEEE

Phil nearly chokes on his drink before bursting out into giggles. “What- that doesn’t make sense!”

“Chat’s weird,” he uses his mug to hide his smile, watching Phil double over in laughter, clutching his gut. Phil wipes his tears away before looking up. The lights cast a warm glow across his side profile, his smile soft and fond, his blond hair falling over his shoulders in a halo. He missed this; the peace, the ability to let himself be vulnerable in front of another, the warmth in his heart. “...Philza?”

“Yeah?”

“I...I make no promises but...” Techno stares into his hot cocoa, his reflection staring back. He closed his eyes. “I’ll try to bring our family together again. I’m the one who broke it.”

“That’s not-”

“It is. I left all for my own selfish reasons. I stayed away because I couldn’t live with the shame of facing you all again after all I did. This is my fault and...it’s only right if I fix it.” When Techno looks up Phil’s smile has turned sad, eyes glossy with unfallen tears.

“You sound like Wil,” he chuckles and wipes his eyes. “But, yeah. Yeah, that...it won’t be easy.”

“No, it won’t.”

“But our family has never been easy.” At that, Techno smiles.

“That’s because you keep taking in orphans.” Techno chuckles when Phil quickly defends himself, waving his hands about. He settles back into his chair listening to his father rant and closes his eyes. He doesn’t realize he begins drifting off until a blanket is being settled around him, a quick kiss pressed to his temple. Techno swears he heard Phil say something, but he’s too tired to process the words. He instead snuggles further into the chair, surrounded by the warmth of the fire and of a full heart, drifting into a dreamless sleep.

“Into the pit, Tommy,” Dream leans against the tent. Tommy had stopped fighting back when Dream threatened to kill him. The wound still hadn’t healed, dirty bandages wrapped around his neck by Ghostbur, dry blood staining through the cloth. Dream mentally counts off every armor piece, tool, and item Tommy had collected in the time Dream was absent. “This is for your own good, Tommy. It’s building character! You know I do this because I care about you, right?”

“Yes, Dream.” Tommy mumbles. Dream lights the TNT and drops it into the pit. The boy’s face barely changes as the explosion goes off, tugging Wilbur’s old coat around himself tighter.

“So, Tommy, do you have anything planned for Christmas?” He watches his eyes light up the slightest bit before ducking his head away. Dream drapes an arm around Tommy’s shoulders. “I heard L’manburg is throwing a festival. We should do something here, you know?”

“I...” Tommy hesitates and looks up to Dream. “I...want to see the Christmas tree. Please can...can I just visit? Just...just a peek through the portal? It won’t be long! I swear! They won’t even know I’m there!”

“Tommy...” Dream’s shoulders rise as he chuckles. “You know why you’re out here in exile.” He sets his hands on both of Tommy’s shoulders.

“I know but-”

“That’s right! They didn’t want you,” his voice drops to a whisper. He leans in close, feeling Tommy sense up underneath him, tightening his grip. “*Tubbo* didn’t want you. Now, why would you want to go back to them? Trust me, Tommy, I just want what’s best for you. They wouldn’t want you to come back.”

“That’s not-”

“Oh, it’s true. Tommy, once you step into L’manburg they would kill you on sight. You don’t even have armor! But I’m right here, and I’ll protect you, so what more do you need?” Dream grasps onto Tommy’s shoulder until his knuckles went white. The boy flinches but he doesn’t ease his grip. “Take it from me, once you cut off those who don’t care, everything is just so much easier!”

“I...” His words seemed to have hit their mark. Tommy deflates, his eyes staring at the grass below his feet, shuffling his boots against the ground. The boots had been what began their bond.

(“Really? I- I can keep them?”

“Of course, Tommy! I told you, I’m your friend. And as your friend, I’d hate it if you wouldn’t be able to walk around.”

“Then-”

(“Now, Tommy, don’t push it.”)

“But I understand,” Dream brushes a hand through Tommy’s greasy curls affectionately. The boy lifts his head up and pouts when he gets dirt brushed off his cheek. “And I will always be your friend. I just have one teeny tiny request.”

“What is it..?”

Suddenly, he roughly grips Tommy’s cheek and forces him to make eye contact with him through the mask. He watches the fear enter his once blue eyes. “Don’t *ever* ask to see L’manburg again. I’m at the end of my patience.”

“...I won’t, Dream.”

“That’s better. Now,” he pats his cheek. “Show me around Logstedshire. You and Ghostbur have made a lot of building progress I see.”

Tommy scrubs his eyes with his sleeve and turns away. “Um, Dream?”

“Yes?”

“If...I can’t go to L’manburg, can they come to me?” Tommy asks softly. He fiddles with his sleeves nervously, head bowed, everything about him tense. Dream hums pretending to give it thought.

“Well...I guess there’s no harm in that. It all depends on if they come, that is.” He watches the boy visibly light up. Grabbing onto Dream’s hand, Tommy leads him towards the campsite Ghostbur built while rambling about his beach party ideas. Dream lets himself get pulled along and only half-listens to the boy as he gets shown around the camp.

Logstedshire is nothing more than a crater and memories.

The remnants of a campsite built off hard work and perseverance laid scattered about the forest.

Dream took a step forward examining his work. The TNT used had barely made a dent in his boundless supply, but the destruction had been immeasurable. He took another step forward then stopped when he heard a crunch.

Underneath his foot was a photo that had survived the explosion. Tommy and Tubbo were on a beach with their arms around each other, both boys smiling ear-to-ear at the camera, so pure and naive. Dream scoops the photo up and holds it in front of his face. Slowly, he ripped the photo in half separating the two then crumbled up Tommy's side, tossing it into the crater.

The grand finale had been so *close*. Just a few more days and Tommy would've been gone forever. But of *course*, a wrench had been thrown into his plan. It was never easy. Drista's mocking laughter bounced around in Dream's skull.

Dream turns to check the surrounding area in case the teen was hiding somewhere when he caught a flash of movement beside Tommy's demolished tent.

"Ghostbur!" Dream calls, putting on the mask of the worried friend, jogging over towards the ghost who was picking through the remains. "Thank the gods I found you. Have you seen Tommy? I've been looking for him but-"

"Dream..." His quiet voice has Dream stopping in his tracks. He lifts his head, yellow eyes piercing into his soul, a ghastly slash running down his sternum, black blood dripping out of the wound onto the grass below. Explosive marks were running across the entirety of his right side.

It had taken Dream countless sleepless nights researching and comparing the information with Sam to discover what had happened; in the process of bringing his vassal back from the void, his mind and soul had been split into two. It wasn't too different from Dream and Drista, but they had their own consciousness and bodies whereas Ghostbur and Wilbur shared one. Ghostbur had more control which made it easier for Dream to control him, but Wilbur was beginning to take control with every passing day.

Staring at the ghost in front of him, Dream realizes Wilbur had finally built up enough strength to put himself on the stage. Dream took a step back.

"What the *fuck* do you think you're doing, Dream?" Wilbur moves like a puppet who'd lost his strings, his head lolling around with every movement. He clearly had forgotten how a physical body worked- corporal or not. Dream knew he had to put the strings back on or else he'd lose his biggest card over the family. Their only weakness. "What the fuck have you done?!"

"Me? All I've done is help everyone! It's *they* who keep betraying me!" Dream swings his arm out to encompass the destruction around him. "I'm Tommy's *friend*. I'm everybody's friend!"

"You manipulated him!" He screams. Tears are slipping down his cheeks down, tears stained with black liquid. "You hurt him and abused him and I just- and I- I just sat there and *watched*. I couldn't do anything because you brought me back! A real friend would never do that if they really cared! I died because I knew my death would be the best for everyone!"

"Death was an escape! You hide behind the mask of Ghostbur because you can't face the atrocities in life and have convinced yourself that everything will be alright. You can live in *peace* like that, and everyone's a lot nicer to you. I've given you a reason to stay, Wilbur. I alone have given you the second chance you desperately yearned for," Dream takes a step forward. His head is spinning. "Your family? They don't truly love you. If they did, they would have come back for you. I alone saved you, Wilbur."

“YOU DIDN’T GIVE ME THE CHOICE! I NEVER CHOSE TO COME BACK FROM THE DEAD!” Wilbur screamed. And there it was. He realized his mistake once the words were out, his eyes going wide, hands flying to his mouth. The color in his eyes drains partially. “No...no, no I...I didn’t...I’m not him- I’m not- he’s dead he’s gone this is my new start I never did those things I-”

“Just accept it.” Dream says sympathetically. He rests his hands on the ghost’s shoulders. He was so close to his breaking point. Dream wanted to push him over the edge and watch him *drown*. “You’re the villain in everyone’s story. You’re the *monster* that keeps them up at night. You didn’t even deserve a grave. Not even a burial. We’re the same, you and I.”

Wilbur pulls away sharply, the fire back in his eyes. Disappointment sits heavy in Dream’s gut; he’s been feeling that a lot lately. “Here’s the thing, Dream, there’s only really just one thing that we have in common; we were both doomed to failure. Look at us- two fools with god complexes who thought we could rule the world. Kinda ironic if you think about it,” he jabs his finger against Dream’s chest. A vicious grin breaks out on his face. “What sets us apart is that at least I wasn’t betrayed by my family. I died out of my own accord. How will you die, Dream? *Alone*.”

The words hit their mark straight on.

“Hmm...” Dream hums, reaching into his back pocket. He watches Wilbur’s victorious grin falter, having expected him to react more. “A shame then that they’ll never know you cared.”

Before Wilbur could escape, Dream shoves a transparent stone into Wilbur’s chest. He can’t help the laugh that escapes him as the Blue did its trick.

The color in Wilbur’s eyes disappears leaving only two holes, the grey swallowing all the light. The gash sews itself up until it completely disappears long forgotten. The explosion scars melt back into his skin and smooth themselves out until not a single blemish was visible.

Ghostbur blinked up into the air a few times then began taking in his surroundings. His hands fiddle with the Blue. A few curls fall over his eyes. Dream relaxes, tapping Ghostbur’s shoulder a couple times to grab his attention.

“...Dream? Oh, hello! Why are we here? Where’s Tommy? Did I have a sad memory again? I...I can’t remember...I...I left L’manburg because...because I wasn’t allowed to stay so I came to Logstedshire and then...then...” He pursues his lips, brows furrowing together in thought. He looked like a child grasping for straws that were too high up for him. Dream smiles.

“We came here together. You had a bad memory, but it’s okay. That’s what the blue is for, remember? It takes all your sadness away.”

“Yes, yes it does! Thank you, Dream! You’re a great friend.”

Something deep inside Dream aches. He ignores it. Wilbur was becoming too much of a liability for him. He was gaining more strength over his ghostly predicament and it would only be a matter of time before he built an immunity to the Blue. Dream’s perfect toy for Tommy would be gone and another thorn in his side would return. He had to go. “Thanks, Ghostbur. Now, I need you to do something for me.”

Ghostbur visibly lights up, hands clasping together, leaning forward urgently. “Of course! Anything! What can I help you with?”

“I just need you to go on a little...trip.”

Snowflakes pelt against his frozen cheeks, clinging to his long eyelashes and scattering themselves in his hair.

Techno reaches out a gloved hand to guide his way through the blizzard. He keeps a firm grip on Carl's leash, directing the horse back towards shelter. Even with his enhanced hearing, he could barely hear over the barreling winds. Their screams drown out the voices leaving Techno in an eerie silence.

Discomfort arises from snow drifting down the collar of his coat, into his boots, and between his gloves and cuffs. Though his feet were beginning to freeze and his footsteps were small, the snow sinking past his ankles with each stride, the knowledge that each step brought him closer to his warm lodge urged him forward.

He didn't know what time it was. The sky above shining past the tangled branches and dark leaves carries no light, the black clouds that came with the storm acting as an impassable barrier. Techno told Tommy not to come after him if he was gone too long, but his words entered one ear and out the other. He just hopes his brother was still waiting for him at home; warm, safe, recovering from the injuries he sustained in exile. Tommy was the reason Techno left at all.

There was only so much healing and regeneration potions could do. They could fix physical and internal injuries, but they did nothing for mental scars. And the ones Dream left on his brother ran *deep*. Techno lost count of the nights he woke up and found Tommy soaked to the bone or standing in the snow barefoot and staring blankly towards the stars. He would never mention it in the morning, eating Techno's gapples and complaining about small things, but he knew the exhaustion was becoming too much.

In hopes that the nearby clerics had sleep aids, Techno set off with Carl planning on returning before sunset. The blizzard had been a surprise to all. The villagers welcomed him with open arms and even offered lodging for the night until the storm passed. It felt nice not being seen as a sign of death and destruction. But he had his younger brother waiting for him and he had promised never to leave him behind again.

Smoke. Techno saw smoke rise over the trees.

"Almost there, Carl. Just hold on a bit longer." He mumbles reassuringly and gives Carl's muzzle a couple pets. As much as he wanted to hop onto the horse's back and ride through the blizzard it would be too dangerous for Carl who could slip on the ice or get snow packed into his hooves.

wait

stop/be-careful

Techno abruptly stops. He ignores Carl chewing on his cape in favor of scanning his surroundings. If there was one thing he could always rely on the voices for it was knowing when danger was near. Techno discreetly gripped his sword hilt in case they were watching him. Did L'manburg finally figure out where he had been hiding? Did they know about Tommy? Was Phil safe?

A branch broke nearby.

Techno spun in the direction the noise came from and drew his sword. He expected Quackity or Fundy or, hell, Tubbo. He, instead, was face to face with Ghostbur. Nearly his entire left arm had *melted* off his body forming a grotesque puddle in the snow whereas countless chunks of his torso were missing. One eye was grey and blind to the world while the other was a dull yellow that stared straight at Techno.

“H...he... *lp ...*” Wilbur whispers, snow-streaked brown curls falling forward over his face. Instead of his telltale yellow sweater, he wore his Pogtopia coat, the tattered material hugging his trembling form.

“Ghost- *Wil*, stay with me,” Techno quickly drops to his knees and grips his shoulders so he doesn’t fall into the snow anymore. His head lolled back from the movement. “What the hell are you doing all the way out here?! You know you melt in the snow, you idiot!” His frozen fingers struggle with unclasping his cape, slipping repeatedly. Once he finally undoes the latches Techno drapes the cape around Wilbur, tugging the hood he’d sewn on over his head.

“Tech...no..? *You’re ba-ad... Why...*” It was like two separate people were speaking at once. Wilbur’s face screws up and his unmelted hand clutches his hair. “M-My... *head...*”

“Hey, look at me,” Techno pants. He makes sure Wilbur is completely cocooned inside the cape before scooping him up. The ghost whimpers when Techno hefts him onto Carl’s back, making sure he has a good grip on the reins. The situation was dire and he didn’t want to carry Wilbur back in fear he may worsen his injuries. “Don’t you dare pass out on me. Look, everything’s gonna be fine.”

someone hurt him kill them kiLL THEM

~~*who hurt the baby/they need to die/die/DIE!*~~

“C...co *ld ...*” Wilbur mumbles. If Techno hadn’t gone this way specifically then Wilbur would’ve become nothing more than a puddle. No one would know. Techno tries not to linger on the thought. “Tom...Tommy he’s... *danger...hurt...*” He wiggles around, weakly attempting to climb off.

“Stop that. Tommy’s at my base, remember? We brought him there together. He’s safe, Wil. You’ll see him soon. Just stay awake, okay?”

“M sorry... *wan...na help ...*”

“Apologize when you’re coherent, got it?” He gets a weak nod in response. Techno tightens his grip. The trip home feels like an eternity. The cape thankfully shields Wilbur from the snow and stops his melting, but the damage already done wasn’t healing. Techno just hoped rest and sitting by a warm fire would help. He corrals Carl into the pen and he doesn’t turn when the doors are swung open.

“About time you got back! I was startin’ to think you froze or some shit!” Tommy shouts. His shoes stomp on the stairs as he comes down, turning the corner coming face to face with the situation. The color in his face drains. “W- Wil- what happened to him?! Who did this?!”

“I don’t know, Tommy. That doesn’t matter right now. Get a fire going and some blankets. I’m gonna bring him in,” Techno barks, hefting Wilbur into his arms. He was light- *too* light even for a ghost. Tommy, for once, does what he’s told and sprints back into the cottage. “Yer gonna be fine, Wil. Everything will be fine.”

Techno kicks the doors shut once inside and carries Wilbur to the fireplace, setting him down onto the rug as gingerly as possible. He wasn’t breathing and he had no pulse, but that was to be expected. His eyes were still open so Techno took that as a good sign.

“Okay, I got all the blankets I could find and I threw buncha logs into the fire,” Tommy rambles. He comes tumbling down the stairs with a pile of blankets in his arms. The teen drops onto his

knees beside Wilbur and the two get to work wrapping him up. “Are you sure this will work? I mean, can he even *get* warm? What if we’re doing this all wrong?”

“Shut up, Tommy. This will work,” he brushes damp hair out of Wilbur’s forehead, his hand lingering in his hair. “It...it has to. I...”

(Techno had never seen Wilbur so quiet. He knelt down beside his twin’s corpse, a shaky hand brushing the greasy curls out of his eyes. Techno gently lifted Wilbur off the ground into his arms, head limply resting against his chest. Seeing his brother like this felt like a nightmare. An all too familiar nightmare. Wilbur had always been so full of vigor, bringing hope and happiness to anyone who knew him, the missing part of Techno’s soul. “I’m sorry...Wil, I...I’m sorry...I should’ve done more...” He whispers. He hugs Wilbur closer, tears dripping into his brother’s hair. “I never should have left you...I’m so sorry...”)

“I can’t lose him again...” Techno mumbles. He swallows the lump in his throat. “I *won’t* lose him again.”

They were too loud.

They wanted blood. They didn’t care who’s or what’s. They had gone too long without it and they had become *hungry*.

Techno couldn’t eat. Everything tasted like ash. One time, he’d been cutting up meat for dinner when blood started seeping out of it. He knew it wasn’t real. It was all just in his head. But the blood had looked so *familiar* - warm and gushing and pouring off the counters. Techno had been broken out of his trance by Tommy bragging about the cobblestone tower he was building.

It wasn’t long until Techno stopped sleeping as well. The voices were loudest at night, whispering of past victories and wars, itching for a fight. He distracted himself with potion brewing. He’d sit by the windowsill until morning, practicing what Phil had taught him as a piglet. Ghostbur was *elated* when he discovered Techno’s interest. He could ramble for hours about how to make the best potions and how useful each was.

Distractions could only last for so long. Techno knew it was a matter of time before the voices began turning on his family again, and he saw Tommy no longer as a living being but as his next victim. The obvious answer was to kill something, but Techno had sworn off violence and he *enjoyed* being a pacifist. He liked his new life. He liked sowing potatoes in the garden and helping raise turtles in the canal he built. Even Chat warmed up to the lifestyle, constantly nagging Techno to get a pet fox or to name all his animals.

But the Blood God demanded blood.

Techno laid in bed watching the moonbeams shine across his ceiling. The clock in his room kept ticking, Tommy’s snoring in the basement filled up the entire house, and sometimes he could hear Ghostbur’s echoey singing. It was *agonizing*. Every fiber of his being was screaming and begging for it all to stop.

the village nearby could use a massacre no one would know

~~*it was a zombie attack we could say*~~

Tick. Tock. He sat up, bare feet pressed against the floorboards, hair tumbling down his shoulders.

there are plenty of orphans for us to slaughter as well

ooh/yes-we-to/le/to/kill-orphans!

Tick. Tock. His throat was dry. His skin was on fire. Techno grabbed his sword and stood up.

plenty of sacrifices for the blood god

BLOOD/FOR/THE/BLOOD-GOD/

Techno broke the clock with one quick swing. He watches the glass shatter and the springs are scattered across the floor. He lets his sword go limp, the blade scratching the floorboards.

more destruction more more more

BLOOD WE WANT BLOOD

He blacks out.

When Techno comes to, he's standing outside the cottage barefoot in the snow. Dead mobs and animals surround him, their blood splattered across him, red bleeding into the white below his feet. Techno gulps for air. The veins in his arms glow a vibrant red and he clutches his head. He doesn't remember killing them. He doesn't even remember stepping outside. He'd lost control again.

n ot enough not enough never enough

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

“Stop...” He grumbles. There is a presence knocking on his head trying to take control and finish the job. Techno bit his cheek until he tasted blood.

It was so loud.

KILL THEM KILL EVERYONE

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

“...Techno?” Ghostbur's gentle voice breaks through and reaches Techno. Never before had he been happier to hear his brother.

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

we want BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD KILL HIM

“Techno? Are- are you alright?” Ghostbur takes a step forward. His fingers brush against Techno's cape. He is still recovering, wearing the Antarctic Empire themed clothes Techno insisted he wears instead of the half-melted coat, his left arm only half way reformed.

KILL HIM TECHNOBLADE

KILL HIM KILL HIM KILL HIM KILL HIM KILL HIM KILL HIM KILL HIM

In one swift movement, Techno whirls around putting his sword to Ghostbur's throat. His hand was shaking. Logically, he knows the sword would do little to nothing against the ghost. That didn't make it any easier.

“Get away from me,” Techno begs, his voice hoarse from staying out in the cold so long. “They- they want blood- go- get away-

leave.”

Ghostbur carefully reaches over. He moves slow enough so Techno could see every movement. Gently, Ghostbur plucks the sword from Techno’s grip, tossing it onto the snow.

“Don’t be silly,” he huffs, breath fanning across his face. Ghostbur grips Techno’s nightshirt tugging him into a limp, half sleepy hug, burying his face against his shoulder. Despite being a ghost he was so warm.

His fingers curl into Techno’s cape, hair tickling his chin. “M not going anywhere...”

“I...” Techno’s hands stay hovering over Ghostbur’s back, afraid that if he hugged him back he’d lose control. He eventually breaks. He clings onto his twin to anchor himself against Chat. “I...so loud... was so loud...” Ghostbur hums rubbing soothing circles onto Techno’s back. When tears stain his shirt and soft sobs rack through Techno, the ghost doesn’t mention it.

“It’s okay. You’re not gonna hurt me.” Ghostbur mumbles. Techno lifts his head up just enough the house was in his vision. Tommy stood by the doors wrapped in a blanket and wrapping his eyes sleepily, having woken up from all the commotion. Techno’s stomach dropped. Friend wasn’t anywhere in sight.

“Ghostbur...did...did I...” He looks around the scattered corpses searching for the blue wool. “Where is Friend?”

“Huh? Oh! He’s downstairs with Bob! The two have been getting along lately.” Techno relaxes. He settles back into his brother’s embrace, tucking his neck into his shoulder, methodically counting in his head until his breathing evened out. “Hey, Techno?”

“Hmm?”

“Remember when we were kids and you’d have nightmares?” Ghostbur giggles fondly. “I remember you used to crawl into my bed and wake me up with your cold feet. I’d complain because who wouldn’t! But then I saw how upset you were and I helped calm you down. You’d hog all the blankets and refused to let go of my hand even when you finally fell asleep.”

“I remember that differently. You stole the blankets,” he smiles at his brother’s offended gasp.

“I did not!” For a moment, Techno let himself get lost in the memories. Sometimes Techno would confide in Wilbur about what the nightmares were about, their whispers filling the room, letting himself be held closed as reassurances were mumbled into his hair. He got better at ignoring the voices, and Phil showed him home remedies that made falling asleep easier. But every so often Techno would crawl back into Wilbur’s bed and clutch his hand just as he did years ago. “Techno? You’re shivering. We should get inside. I can make cocoa!”

“Just...” Techno grabs Ghostbur’s hand before he could pull away. He feels like a piglet again, unable to look his brother in the eye, ears flat against his head. Chat was strangely quiet after their outburst. Maybe they were just as exhausted. “Let’s just. Stay like this. Just for a little longer.”

“Okay.”

History always repeats itself.

Dream sits atop the camarvan cloaked in invisibility. A cage had been built along with seating for the public execution. Techno was knelt inside bleeding from his temple after his outburst upon

seeing Phil injured and placed on house arrest. His wings had been clipped so he couldn't fly and chained to his house. Dream didn't see the issue; the man had been working alongside an anarchist and aiding him all while living in the nation. Then again, Dream couldn't fully understand mortal emotions. Not anymore at least.

Tubbo stood beside the cage giving a speech to the Butchers and those who had gathered. Quackity seemed the most pleased with the outcome, Techno's blood splattered across his apron and face, sadistic glee burning in his eyes. Fundy kept his eyes down as if unable to bring himself to witness the death of his uncle. An uncle he never knew. Ranboo was the most out of place; the kid clearly had no loyalties to L'manburg, yet he helped the Butchers and stood alongside them. Dream watched the enderman hybrid carefully. He was Tommy's friend. He remembered seeing him visit Logsted a few times. He could become a liability.

That's when Dream saw him.

Standing on the bridge beside the cage was Ghostbur. The ghost was accompanied by a blue sheep and wearing a bright smile despite the situation. Dream gritted his teeth. How the hell had he *survived*? He made sure to send him out during a blizzard and in a direction clear away from Techno's base. Bringing Wilbur back from the dead was his biggest mistake, and now he stood right in front of him.

He had to kill him now. The moat would suffice. It was deep enough where the ghost couldn't swim out from and the others would be too distracted with Techno to even notice.

An explosion sent Dream spiraling back to reality.

A flurry of arrows was shot across the podium. Dream heard Fundy curse and duck just in time for an arrow to zip over his head. Punz jumps down in a blur of white and gold sprints across the deck. Perfect timing.

"Shit- someone stop him!" TNT followed the man's footsteps, more arrows being fired whenever someone got too close, keeping his distance. Dream shot a few precise arrows whenever Punz's back was turned. He managed to hit Fundy in the shoulder, watching the hybrid stumble back.

The sound of the lever being flickered sounded so much like the bells of death. Quackity stood beside the pillar and laughed a hysterical and almost maniacal sound as the redstone activated and the anvil started falling down.

The anvil landed with quite a heavy sound as the metal tore through his flesh and bone and met the ground. Blood began seeping out through the cage. Phil's cries of pure anguish tore through the silence.

Techno had died.

No longer than a second had passed before an earth-shattering sound rippled across the land. A shower of gold and emerald sparkles emitted from the cage. Quackity, who had been the closest, was flung across the floorboards. A cloud of smoke soon followed the explosion, curling around the podium hiding it and everything inside. Dream grinned. He saw red crooked lines appear through the smoke. Soon after, the cage was tossed onto the ground, breaking through the deck and getting stuck midway.

The man who emerged from the smoke wasn't Techno, nor was it the Blood God. It was a merge of the two who had made a pact off their mutual anger. There was a heavy flow of blood pouring down the right side of his face. Totems of undying took physical prices in exchange for cheating

death. Dream once paid it with a finger, and it seems Techno paid it with his eye.

“TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES!” His voice rang out across the battlefield. Dream hopped down from his spot and grabbed Carl. He had snuck the horse away long before the execution when the Butchers were busy gloating about their victory. The horse clearly didn’t like Dream, but when he realized the god wasn’t going to kill him he reluctantly came along. Punz kept the Butchers busy long enough for Techno’s escape just as they had discussed beforehand.

A more couple explosions more rang out across the deck. Stray sparks settle the wooden structure ablaze. Dream waited on the outskirts of L’manburg, reaching out just before Techno could sprint past, quickly covering his mouth with a hand.

“Shh, it’s just me. Stay close and stay quiet.” Dream whispers. Techno glares up at him but when Dream removes his hand he stays quiet. He didn’t exactly have much of a choice in the situation. “Follow me. I’m going to take you to the sewers. They lead through L’manburg and the SMP. There’s a tunnel that goes in the right direction to your base.”

“Hey, you good?” Techno mumbles to Carl. He pets the horse’s muzzle, smiling softly despite the situation. Dream’s gut churns. Jealousy? Anger? He turned away and shoved the feeling aside. “Why are you helping me?”

“You’re a friend. And a good ally. I’d hate for you to die so early in the game,” he holds a curtain of vines up so Techno and Carl could pass through. “The sewers can be confusing, but since you’re the human GPS and all you shouldn’t have an issue.”

“Hah. Funny.” Neither of them laughs. Dream leads the two underneath the outskirts until they reach a room built entirely out of blackstone. Five chests covered in dust lined the walls with a new sixth chest placed at the front. Techno stopped in front of the chests.

TommyInnit.

(“Eret?! Eret- you bastard-” Tommy choked on his blood when Dream’s axe sliced through his throat. He gripped the wound, stumbling back a few times, before falling over.)

Wilbur Soot.

(“Eret, how could you-” Wilbur put up a good enough fight, but Punz was uninjured and had the advantage. The leader of the revolution died with a sword buried in his heart.)

“This chest has supplies for you. It’s not much, but it will get you to your base.” Dream says. Techno is too quiet. His hand sits atop Wilbur’s chest, a distant look in his eyes. “This is as far as I go. Good luck.”

Techno nods. He still doesn’t move. Dream tugs his hood up and goes back the way he came, hidden in the shadows as he passes by a seething Quackity. For a brief moment, Dream debates going back and warning Techno. He could fight alongside him once again and maybe- just maybe- salvage whatever remained of their friendship. Maybe Techno would take him back to his base and he could join the Anarchist Antarctic in their pursuit for revenge. Maybe he could have a family.

Dream kept walking.

Perhaps jumping the gap across the moat wasn't his smartest idea.

With each step, a jarring pain shot through his ankle to his knee. Techno was pretty sure he broke,

or at least cracked, something. His reconstructed lungs were having trouble keeping up with the pressure of the situation. Each breath was ragged and made his head spin. Techno dug through the chest finding bandages and got to work wrapping them around his eye. He had to stop the bleeding or else he wouldn't stay conscious long enough to even reach his base.

“What the fuck are you doing here, Technoblade?”

Techno sighs. He looks back over his shoulder. Quackity stands blocking his exit from the final control room and wielding a netherite axe thrumming with enchantments. He was panting, having clearly chased after Techno the moment he escaped. “How the fuck did that anvil not kill you?!”

Techno can't help but laugh at that. He reaches into the chest searching for a weapon. “Do you think death can stop me, Quackity? I tried being reasonable, but you brought this upon yourself. I didn't want to fight anyone! I retired! But you just couldn't give it up.”

“This isn't about L'manburg, Technoblade,” Quackity growls, absolutely blinded by his anger. “You're on the fucking hitlist. It doesn't matter how much you've 'changed,' you're going to die today. And I don't care how long it fucking takes me, or what I have to do to get you Techno. I'm going to fucking kill you. I am going to kill you, Technoblade.”

“I just have one question, Quackity.” He brought a pickaxe out from the chest. He tips his head back. The familiar thrum of the Blood god's strengths flows through him again and he casually brushes his hair back. “Do you think you're enough to kill me? Do you really think you can take me?”

KILL HIM HE HURT US HE HURT PHIL

~~BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD~~

“Let's fucking find out you son of a bitch!” Quackity brought his axe up to swing. Techno stepped back just in time to dodge, the blaze managing to only cut a few strands of hair. He unclips his cape and throws it at Quackity. While blinded, Techno threw a potion onto the ground. Smoke erupted filling up the enclosed room. “Really? Restoring to potions?”

Techno's eyes quickly adjusted in the smoke and his ears honed in on Quackity's breathing. Footsteps were misleading. He licked his fangs. He hadn't realized just how much he missed the thrill of battle and the adrenaline it brought.

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

~~TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES~~

” I have a pickaxe, and I'LL PUT IT THROUGH YOUR TEETH, QUACKITY!” Techno swung through the smoke. Quackity was a second too slow. The head slices across Quackity's face in one clean line. Keeping up the pressure, Techno swung the pickaxe into his knees successfully breaking them and sending Quackity onto the ground. “This,” he can taste the blood in his mouth. “Is for hurting Phil!”

Techno relishes Quackity's screams as he slams the eye of the pickaxe into his mouth. Chat grows louder. Their cheering fuels him. He swings again. He begins to lose count. All he hears is the screaming and red fills his vision.

When Techno finally stops, there is nothing but a large blood splatter across the blackstone and a few broken teeth that had been pulled out.

“Punz, come on a walk with me.”

The cold onshore breeze blew right through Dream’s cloak and he bowed his head to one side, closing his eyes as the salty wind pushed against his mask. The sand carried in the wind was making its way through his leggings. He could hear the waves lapping like the ticking of a leisurely clock, never demanding that he move on like the others. Dream remembered when he came with the others to the beach during the summer.

He’d build sandcastles with Bad and sit by the campfire as Wilbur played guitar or the group shared scary stories. Tommy would always overburn his marshmallows and Skeppy would wait until George wasn’t looking to steal his finished s’mores. Now the beach was silent. Only the echoes of laughter remained.

Punz steps up behind Dream. His blonde hair is swept back by the winds and his eyes squint as he took in the prison built along the ocean.

“What is this?” Punz asks breaking the sacred silence. Dream hums, kicking a sea shell back into the water.

“Pandora’s Vault. It was constructed by Sam and me to house our enemies. We have taken every precaution to make it inescapable. We’ll have elder guardians to give the prisoners mining fatigue, obsidian and water layered walls for wither attacks, twenty or so cells.” He explains. He can’t help the pride in his voice. Sam truly was a redstone genius, and with Dream’s endless material supply they could do marvels.

“Does anyone else know about it?” Punz watches the lava columns flow continuously.

“No one in L’manburg, if that’s what you mean. Other than Quackity, but I doubt he knows what it is or what it’s true purpose is for.”

He nods. Dream stares into the horizon. The sun was setting. Another day would pass, and another would arise with more problems to address. He was becoming rather good at fixing problems. “So, why have you brought me out here, Dream?”

“Punz, you know I just want a community where there are no wars, no conflicts, no countries or laws. Just one big happy family. It’s all I’ve ever wanted,” Dream starts off. Ever since the beginning, Punz had always stood by his side. Originally it was because he paid the mercenary for his services, but Dream liked to believe their relationship had developed past the need for money. He liked to think he had *one* friend. “Before L’manburg, there had been no wars. We had just lived in peace.”

“Everything you’ve done has been for the good of the Dream SMP.” Punz agrees. He stands just a step behind Dream.

“Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.” He recites then chuckles. “Techno told me that. It was from a book he always read. I never understood it until now. Punz, you’re the only one on my side. L’manburg has already attempted an execution against Technoblade, and it’s only a matter of time before they make an attempt on my life.”

“What do you want me to do, Dream?” He steps forward. Their shoulders brush as the wind blows his hood back. Punz has a hand on his sword, a silent promise, eyes determined. “How can I help?”

“I want to stage a falling out between us to cut our ties. Once you do that, L’manburg will welcome you with open arms believing they have rallied the population against me. You’d act as my spy, of sorts. Collecting information, informing me of their plans, learning secrets.” Dream glances at Punz. “If you stand by my side, it could risk your safety. The last thing I want is for you to be hurt on my behalf. We’re friends, after all.”

“I get that. A two on twenty fight is pretty tough anyways,” he scratches the back of his neck in thought. “Yeah, I can work with that. I’m on neutral terms with most of L’manburg, so gaining their trust won’t be hard. What about you?”

“I...have some business to attend to. Which leads me to my second point,” Punz blinks when Dream grasps his shoulder, the two face to face. “Punz, I want you to watch over the Dream SMP while I’m gone. I’m appointing you as the de-facto leader. In secret, of course.”

“...okay. I’ll take care of things while you’re gone,” Dream breathes out a sigh of relief. He faces the prison again admiring the obsidian walls in the warm light. “When should we put this plan into action?”

“In front of others so they can witness it first hand. They have to believe you hate me and words alone won’t be enough. L’manburg is a country built off paranoia.”

“We could have a falling-out over the death of Bumpkin. I’d replace him beforehand so the real one would be safe, but the others won’t know that.”

Dream tenses.

(“I think they like you,” Sapnap laughs. The white horse closes their eyes in silent trust and dips their head in front of Dream. Dream marvels over the horse’s pure white coat, gently running his hand along their muzzle, wondering how he never saw just how beautiful animals were before. “You should name them.”

“Spirit.”)

“That,” he swallows. “That works.”

(“I don’t give a shit about Spirit!” Dream shouts. He stares at the hide in Tommy’s hand, the hair still as pristine as he remembered. Months ago, Dream would have crumbled and given up everything just to have the last thing of his beloved horse. As he ripped the hide from Tommy’s hand and threw it onto the ground, Dream just felt nothing.)

“Just...one last thing.” Dream says before Punz left.

“What is it?”

“How...” He flexes his hand. In the water, he can see George and Sapnap’s backs. Dream realizes he could no longer remember their faces. “Never mind.” Dream clears his throat and crosses his arms. “I just want you to know I care. I always have.”

“I know, Dream. I’m sorry the others can’t see that. I’ll let you know when I’m ready to go through with the plan,” he listens to Punz’s footsteps lead him away from the beach until he’s left alone. The sun disappears on the horizon and the moon rises in its wake. There aren’t any stars out. Deep down he knows that if Punz knew the whole story he’d turn on him as well. They were friends, but for how much longer?

“I care...” He whispers. Without anyone to reassure him, the words feel hollow.

Techno had just woken up when Ghostbur came barging into his room.

“Dream is here.”

Techno shoved potions of invisibility into Tommy’s arms and hid Ghostbur in the basement before cleaning up what he could. The two cups of coffee, the two dirty plates, the thrown about clothes, the blue scattered in odd places. By the time Techno had taken care of everything, Dream was at his door, waving cheerily through the door.

“You have a really nice place out here. Retirement suits you,” Dream whistles, stepping into the cottage. He already looks too at home. He takes a moment to examine his surroundings.

“So I’ve heard...” Techno mumbles. He takes a moment to change his bandages. Dream doesn’t comment, preoccupying himself with admiring the art and photos on the walls. “Just woke up. I didn’t get a chance to change them beforehand. You tend to just ominously show up on people’s lawns without warning.”

Dream laughs from his stomach. “Yeah, I’ve been told that a lot. This place has really come together since the last time I was here.”

“Why are you here, Dream? I know this isn’t a social visit.” Techno stands on edge, well aware why Dream was here, subtly glancing towards the box Tommy was hiding in.

“What? I can’t visit an old friend?” He keeps up the ‘best friend’ facade for another minute before it drops. Dream sighs, tension rising to his shoulders. He stops in front of the box. Everything about him was off- *wrong*. He carries an easy-going air, but all of Techno instincts were *screaming* for him to run or prepare for a fight. He did the latter. “Techno, I know Tommy has been here. No. I *know* he’s here.”

Dream tugs the box lid down and peers inside. Techno slowly let his hand rest on *Toothpick* just in case Dream noticed the potion particles. Thankfully, the god stood up and continued his search around the cottage, heading downstairs. While in passing, Techno kicks the side back up with his hoof, begging the gods for Tommy to stay quiet.

play dumb

~~*don't let him know he can't know he's here*~~

“Who’s Tommy?” Techno internally cringes.

not that dumb!

~~*he'll never suspect anything!*~~

“Riiiiight,” Dream hums. He pokes through Techno’s chests. “Your gapple supply has gotten pretty low.”

“Oh, you know, lots of mob spawn in the area. I am injured after all,” Techno leans on the wall. He curses internally when he realizes Tommy left the doors open. Dream seems to have noticed this and shoots a zombie between the eyes with a crossbow bolt before it could cross the threshold.

“Thanks. Don’t want them to kill my villagers. Gotta keep those low prices and all.”

“As you may already know, Tommy left exile. Now, as long as he isn’t in L’manburg or SMP lands, I don’t care,” he casually reloads his crossbow. He doesn’t put it away. “But as his *friend*, I

just want to make sure he's safe! We had a sort of a... *falling out* the last time I saw him. I just want to clear things up, is all."

he's lying

~~*odd/I think the bad man wants to shoot us*~~

"Well, that must be really disappointing for you considering Tommy isn't *here*." Techno growls the last word out, following Dream back upstairs. "He hasn't been here as far as I know, and he isn't here currently. You'll have to look somewhere else. Try the Badlands."

"Oh, if he was in the Badlands, I would know. Everyone's my friend, after all. And friends don't lie to each other. Right, *Technoblade*?" Dream steps up close to Techno and tilts his head. He can see the edge of his lips pulled into a tight grin behind his mask.

"Right," Techno mumbles.

"Great! So, if you see Tommy, let me know. I just wanna see him again. Make sure he's doing alright and all," Dream steps outside then lifts a finger to his painted-on mouth in thought. "Oh, one more thing-"

"Dream," he shoves their shoulders together and blocks the entrance back before Dream could weasel his way back inside. His hand falls onto the hilt of his pickaxe in a warning. A green glow flashes underneath Dream's cloak. Dream angles his wrist so the light bounced off *Nightmare*'s blade. "I think you've overstayed your welcome."

"It seems so, old friend," he hated how readily Dream agreed. He threw his hands up with a cordial chuckle, but Techno knew he was scheming *something*. He never went down without a fight unless he had a plan. "I trust that, in the end, you'll make the right choices. And that you'll keep true to the favor you owe me for helping you escape execution. Friends don't lie to each other, after all."

He doesn't move from his spot at the door. "See you, Dream."

Techno watches Dream leave the same way he came, his boots leaving footprints that were already filling up with snow. He only unclenches his hand once he's back inside. The sound of the locks clicking rings out in the too-quiet house.

we should have killed him he hurt tommy

~~*tommy find tommy where's the baby*~~

"Calm down, Chat," Techo murmurs. "You guys are seriously putting me on edge." He checks on his potions as an extra precaution while the lid to the box comes creaking open. There's a shuffle of clothes followed by a shaky gasp for air.

"Is- is he gone?"

"No, he's like. Right outside. He's about to let a creeper blow up my lawn because he's a dick," they had been cutting it close with time because Tommy's invisibility potion finally wore off. Techno waits until Dream's figure disappears in the forest to turn around. Countless tears of lava were pouring down Tommy's face despite his best efforts to scrub them away. He only ended up burning his hands, thin puffs of steam rising up. Techno sighs. "Tommy- stop, you're just gonna hurt yourself doing that."

"I...I thought...he- he was looking r-right *at me!*" Tommy hiccups. He collapses onto the ground

when his knees give out. “He was looking right at me, Techno. And- and the worst part is...a part of me *wished* he did see me. I...Fuck I miss him so much, man! He- he’s my only friend! He was there for me!” He digs his nails into his curls and tugs hard. “No- no, he’s not. He’s not my friend he- Dream is the bad guy he- he showed up to my party and he visited me every day but it was...”

“Tommy, I need you to breathe,” Techno kneels in front of his brother. “Tommy, you need to *breathe*.”

“I don’t- I don’t want to go back I- I don’t want to be alone please please Techno don’t- don’t send me back don’t-” he lunges forward and buries himself against Techno’s chest. His trembling fingers curl into his vest, unable to hold back his sobs any longer. Techno wraps his arms around Tommy holding him as close as he could without hurting the teen.

“It’ll be okay, Tommy. You’re safe here.”

“Well, well! Such a surprise seeing you three all the way out here! Last I heard, all of you weren’t allowed here.” Dream watches Tommy tense up. Techno places himself in front of Tommy gripping onto his crossbow tighter. Ghostbur looks between the three in confusion, nervously wringing his hands. “You know you’re exiled from L’manburg, but breaking that exile and taking someone hostage? Honestly, I’m disappointed.” He lifted his axe up till it was resting over his shoulders. “So? Have you begun to realize I was right? I was just trying to save you from getting hurt.”

“I...no, I think they care about me...” Tommy tugs at his coat sleeves. His eyes dart up to Dream’s mask then to the ground repeatedly. “I...I’ve changed and I think they’re realizing that...”

“Tommy...” Ghostbur whispers and sets his hand on Tommy’s shoulder reassuringly. He mumbles something too low for Dream to hear. He tightens his grip on the axe.

“Care about you? Tommy, they *exiled* you. And your family? Where were they?” Dream tuts. He shoots a smile at Techno who growls. He was playing with fire by pushing the three’s limits, but this confrontation was bound to happen. Might as well nip it in the bud. “Techno? He *mocked* you. Ghostbur *left* you. Phil? Where was your dear father?”

“But Dream I-”

“This is why you never should have left! Tommy, this whole ‘bond’ you’ve invented proves you’re just too naive to be here!” Dream shakes his head sympathetically. He steps closer and holds his arms open. “They left you out there to *die* ! Or have you forgotten? I’m the only one who visited. I’m the only one who cares about you. Wasn’t I the one who stopped you from jumping? So let’s just put this all in the past. Come back with me now and-”

“No!” Tommy shouts. Once he realizes what he’s done, Tommy covers his mouth, eyes filling up with tears. “Wait...wait I’m sorry I...I didn’t...”

“No?” Dream’s arms slowly drop. “Oh...I see how it is. Fine, if you’re so sure, you won’t mind if I burn your discs. You’ve changed, after all.”

“No! Don’t! Dream- stop- stop it I’m sorry I-”

“*This* is why you’re here! Your selfishness is the reason you got exiled in the first place! Your own greed turned your precious Tubbo against you. Your family doesn’t even care about you- they’re just using you for their own gain! Once you lose your value, everyone will leave you just as they did before! But wait!” He dramatically gasps and presses a hand to his chest. “They’re your *friends*

! If they really do care, as I do, that would never happen!”

“Dream, wait, please-”

“So, Tommy, here’s what’s gonna happen. You’re gonna come back with me, or I’m gonna burn your discs and kill your friends.”

“That’s going to be a problem, Dream,” Techno moves to completely shield Tommy behind himself. Tommy peeks around Techno’s side to stick his tongue out at Dream and tug his bottom eyelid down. “Because he’s with me.”

And there it was.

“I see.” Dream tightly taps his jaw with his fist. “Hmm. That is quite a predicament, isn’t it?”

“It is. Tommy is under my protection,” something in Techno’s face changes. He lowers his crossbow. The bastard pig had a plan of his own. Dream taught him too well. “Unless, you want to call in that favor.”

Tommy’s relief morphed into panic. “Wh- Techno? Wh- what favor?” He clutches at Techno’s sleeve tugging desperately, eyes darting between the two gods. “Techno?!”

Techno won the confrontation the second he acknowledged that Dream has power over him. Dream had been backed into a corner: release Tommy or release Techno from his debt. The moment he released Techno from his debt Dream would lose all the power he held over Techno, and if he gave up Tommy all his work deteriorating his mind would be for nothing. He couldn’t have both. Techno knew this.

“Hmm...” He pretends to give it some more thought. Ghostbur gently tugs Tommy away from Techno and tries reassuring his brother while the betrayal never left his face. Maybe this could work in Dream’s favor. “No, I don’t think I will. I have something else in mind for that favor.”

“Right. We’ll be on our way now.” The two circle each other until the group is beside the Nether portal and Dream stands under the archway leading to the rebuilt community house. In passing, Ghostbur bumps into Dream’s shoulder. “Tommy, Ghostbur, let’s go.”

“Okay, Techno!” Ghostbur chirps. His obliviousness to the situation was envious. But then Dream catches the blue in his hands, sucking away his emotions, and decides he’d rather hate the world than not understand it. “Come on, Tommy!”

“Tommy, let’s go,” Techno tugs on Tommy’s arm but the boy doesn’t move. His feet stay planted and his eyes trained on Dream.

“Dream?” Tommy’s voice has stopped wavering. There’s a familiar spark in his eyes that Dream thought he snuffed out weeks ago.

“Yes, Tommy?”

“You know what I think? I think you’re scared of me.” Once Tommy realizes the words hit their mark, he continues.

(“Here’s the thing, Dream, there’s only really just one thing that we have in common; we were both doomed to failure.”)

Dream thought that by separating Tubbo and Tommy the spark that had begun L’manburg would

die, but he had just done the opposite. Tommy came out the other side prepared for a fight, the blue in his eyes stronger than before. "It's why you've done all of this! You're scared of me because I'm the only one who's stood up to you. So you know what? Go fuck yourself."

("What sets us apart is that at least I wasn't betrayed by my family. I died out of my own accord. How will you die, Dream? Alone.")

He doesn't stop them when they step through the portal and disappear into the Nether. Dream stands there for a few more minutes processing what had just happened. His hand twitches. When Dream finally breaks out of his stupor, he slams his fist into the arch, watching the obsidian crumble underneath his strength and shatter the doorway.

The wither skull is heavy in his hands.

Techno sighs and hangs it up on the wall alongside the rest. He'd originally planned on just getting another six, but then six became twelve and it spiraled out of control. Techno had convinced himself that killing in the Nether wasn't breaking his oath of peace and that stabbing wither skeletons to death until they were nothing more than bone meal was to make sure he stayed fit. He stopped convincing himself after the thirtieth set.

War was coming. He could feel it. Chat was growing restless again. Techno's visits into the tundra during the night became frequent. At least the Blood god wasn't taking over anymore and he was conscious during it all. When Techno came back in the morning, covered in bites and scratches and soaked in blood, his family knew better than to question it. Tommy's smiles became rare and his interactions with Techno almost always ended in an argument that Phil had to sort out. Ghostbur was growing distant, sitting on the roof during the night just staring up at the sky. Even Phil was different, taking long flights or walks during the day to clear his head, always sharpening his sword as if a fight would break out at any minute. Techno missed the days of peace.

A hand settles onto his shoulder from behind. He stiffens. "Techno," Ghostbur's voice is a gentle melody. He hovers around so he's in Techno's field of vision, brows knitted together in concern. "Are you alright? I could feel your sadness."

"I'm fine, Ghostbur. You don't need to worry," Techno sighs. Ghostbur was looking healthier- if that was even possible for a ghost. His eyes were back to their natural yellow, his skin carrying more color, hair bouncing, and full of volume. If not for his transparent skin and hovering feet, the ghost could be mistaken for alive. "What are you doing out here? I thought you were helping Tommy with his stupid tower."

"I was! But, I..." He hesitates. "I wanted to talk to you about something. Dad told me it was a good idea."

"You talked to dad about it?" He doesn't remember seeing the two alone together. Phil and Ghostbur get along well enough, but Techno could see the pain in Phil's eyes whenever he saw the ghost. No matter what any of them said, he'd always blame himself for the death of his son. "What's wrong?" Immediately, Techno's hand fell to his pickaxe, prepared for a fight.

"No- no, it's nothing like that," Ghostbur waves his arms around quickly. He brings his hands to his face, the yellow sleeves that covered his hands now hiding his mouth as well. "I...promise you won't be mad?"

"I won't be mad, Ghostbur. Just tell me what it is."

“I...I’m not Ghostbur,” at Techno’s confused look he elaborates. “I remember everything.”

“You...remember everything.” Techno repeats. Ghostbur- *Wilbur* nods. He floats back, hovering a good few feet off the ground, knees pulled to his chest and eyes staring anywhere but at Techno. “For how long?” Techno asks. He watches Wilbur mutter under his breath and sigh. “Just tell me Wilbur-”

“The entire time,” Wilbur blurts out. Techno freezes. “I...the blue wipes my memories. I don’t know how or why it doesn’t do it to anyone else, but it takes away the sad memories. Dream, at first, used it to control me. But then I realized it...it made everything so much *easier*, Techno. Everyone’s a lot nicer to me. When I’m like this. When I’m dead. Nobody liked Alivebur, but everyone likes Ghostbur! I- I thought that if everyone knew then...”

He swallows the lump in his throat. Techno was angry, but when he saw Wilbur all his anger left him in an instant. Wilbur looked so *broken*. Deep down, Techno could see why Wilbur thought it was his only solution. If Techno had been given the choice to be rid of the voices and live a normal life he would take it in instinct.

“Wil...” Techno holds his hand out. An olive branch. Slowly, Wilbur reaches out, gently holding onto Techno’s hand with both of his own. “It...do you know why I never threw away my blue?” Wilbur shakes his head. “Because I don’t want to let go of my regrets, or my sadness. If I keep the reminders of my mistakes then they’ll never repeat themselves. So I’ll never be that helpless again. I learn from it, Wil.”

“I...I don’t know if I can...” Wilbur whispers. He runs a thumb over Techno’s hand, hair falling over his eyes hiding them from view. He looks so small like this. “I...I hurt so many people...and the worst part is I don’t regret it. Having Phil kill me had been my best decision. I...I’m just like Dream.”

“No, you *aren’t*,” he puts sharp emphasis into his words so Wilbur looks up at him. His eyes are glossy with tears. “You’re a lot of things, but you aren’t Dream. He’s got his own issues to sort through. But, Wil, I’m not giving up on you even if you give up on yourself. When I lived in the Nether, I had no future. I would die there never knowing what I could have had. You gave me a home- a family. I won’t leave your side again. Ever.”

Before Techno knows it, he’s got his arms full of Wilbur. His head is tucked under his chin, face buried against his chest, hands clutching onto his shirt. With a content sigh, Techno wraps his arms around Wilbur, his tail fondly batting against his leg.

protect him

~~*keep him safe*~~

Maybe Chat wasn’t wrong about everything all the time.

“When did you get so good with words?” Wilbur mumbles. Techno can’t help but smile.

“You’d be surprised by all the people I’ve met. Once everything here is over, let’s go together. I can show you the Antarctic Empire.” Techno offers. He brushes a hand through Wilbur’s curls hearing him hum in thought. “And then, so the others don’t get jealous, we’ll have a family trip or whatever.”

“Tommy’s gonna be pissed if we go somewhere cool and don’t bring him along.”

“He’s always pissed.”

When Wilbur bursts out laughing Techno finds him compelled to laugh as well. He buries his face in Wilbur's curls and laughs until his gut hurts. Wilbur clutches onto Techno's cape hugging him close despite the height difference.

At that moment, the two were kids again, their trauma and responsibilities are completely forgotten.

Techno doesn't let go of Wilbur's hand.

The stronghold is just as cold as he remembers.

Dream clenched his fists as he hesitantly took a step forward. His legs twitched, fighting the impulse to spin around and sprint down the damp, mossy corridor back the way he came. He lost count of how many mobs he killed upon entering. The blood on his hands never went away.

He doesn't remember a lot of his human life- of his parents before they were sacrificed to the queen. All he remembers were their backs as they jumped into the portal. They never came back out. Dream remembers screaming until his throat went raw. It wasn't long until his time came. Each Realm carried its own version of the End, each just slightly different than the other, but to Dream they were all the same. The strongholds were always a labyrinth of death, built off the blood and sacrifices of thousands.

Dream simply followed the screams.

He never told the others. They never asked. Maybe it was better that way.

He stops just outside the portal room. He hadn't stepped inside one in years- not since they came to the Dream SMP and he banned the End from being touched. Dream sucks in a deep breath.

(Dream stands on the edge of the portal. The armor is too loose, poorly fitted for his small stature, the helmet blocking half his vision. The villagers are gathered near the entrance praying to their gods. He grips the sword tightly. It was heavier than the wooden one he'd trained with for years. When Dream first got the sword, he nearly fell over from the weight.

Were his parents scared? Were they pleading for their lives before they saw him in the crowd of villagers? Did they leave him on purpose?

He takes a step forward and fell into the portal.)

"How long have you been here?" Dream's voice cracks halfway through the question. He watches a gold and green blur stiffen in the corner of his eye.

"How did you see me?" She steps up beside Dream, arms crossed behind her back. The smiling mask covers his face just as he did, her hair pulled up into a high ponytail.

"I just did," he supplies unhelpfully. Dream digs through his pockets pulling out the eyes of ender. He stomachs his fear and steps into the portal room. Drista leans on the doorway watching Dream fill the ring. Once all twelve eyes were placed, a deafening boom came from the portal. Where a hole once was now filled by a portal. It was a carbon copy of the Overworld's night sky, green stars sparkling in the void. "When did you come back?"

"I never left," Drista hums. "I was kinda like a ghost. I could see everyone, but they couldn't see me. I'd pass through objects like I wasn't even there. I wanted to show myself to you, but I was stuck like that. Like this. I was pretty scared for a while, but I got used to it. It's kinda cool."

“So...all those times I saw you..?” Deep down, Dream wasn’t surprised. Maybe that’s why he never truly felt alone. Why he never truly missed Drista.

“Yea, that was me.” She stands on top of the stairs. Dream slams the heel of his boot down onto the head of a silverfish watching the blood splatter onto the stone. “I just don’t know why you can see me now. I still haven’t really figured this thing out yet.”

Dream looks up. Drista’s form flickers a few times. The girl appeared in one place then another whenever he blinked.

(“When either of you is in danger of corruption, your souls will know.” Dream reads from the scroll that had shown up at their door. The other gods never visited, but they would leave notes telling more about their predicament.

“That’s kinda weird,” Drista pipes up, rolling a pencil across the table, head resting on her arm. “It’s not like that’s ever gonna be needed. There’s nothing even remotely interesting here.”)

“...I kinda have an idea why.”

“Really? How?” Drista instantly perks up.

“If you had paid attention more, you’d know.” He quickly kills a skeleton just as it rounded the corner, kicking the now lifeless body off his axe.

“Your reflexes have gotten better,” Drista whistles, sitting down criss-cross on the highest stair. Dream pushes his head back and runs a hand through his hair. “Why are you here, Dream? You hate the End. If there’s something you need you could just make it.”

“I’m at a disadvantage,” Dream stares at his hand. It twitches a few times, a jagged scar running across the palm. He barely recognized his body anymore, so warped by all the wars and battles he’d survived through. “I can’t win if I’m afraid of something.”

“So...you think that by defeating the Ender Dragon, you’ll be stronger or whatever?” Drista balances her way around the portal, tiptoeing around the eyes, unafraid of the black void that awaited her.

“...something like that.” He begins sorting through his belongings making sure he was prepared for the trip. While digging through his pockets his fingers brushed along a piece of paper.

Dream unfolds the paper and feels his heart drop.

He stares at George and Sapnap’s smiling faces in the photo. They were so *young* and happy. Sapnap’s facial hair had just begun growing in and George’s hair was long and puffy before he got teased into cutting it. He runs his thumb along the photo. His own face had been burned away, but Dream remembered the day well enough. It felt so long ago.

(They had won their first team tournament and the game-master had offered to take their photo. Dream had never gotten his photo taken before. “Are you guys sure this is a good idea?” He asks nervously, standing just out of frame. Sapnap gives George a worried look as the two take in Dream’s nervousness.

“Dream, come on!” George eventually laughs. He reaches over and grabs onto Dream’s hoodie tugging him into the group. Sapnap latched onto Dream before he could escape. “It’s for the memories!”

“Yeah! And besides, you practically carried us back there! We fucking deserve a photo!” Reluctantly, Dream settled his arms over their shoulders and looked up at the camera. The medal around his neck and the smiles of his friends made his heart warm.)

“Are you sure you wanna do this?” Drista asks quietly. He doesn’t look up from the photo. “If we go in there, we’d be accepting our fate as gods of chaos and have to commit.” He doesn’t point out the ‘we.’

“I’ve already gotten so far...so *close*...” Dream tightens his grip on the photo. “I can’t...Drista, what if I lose myself? What if I’m in the wrong?”

“Hey,” a pair of small hands settle onto his shoulder. Drista is smiling from ear to ear. She knocks a fist affectionately against his head. “That’s why you got me! Personally, I think screwing with the mortals will be fun. They kinda started it anyway. L’manburg is a dumb name for a nation.”

“You...you’re on my side.” He couldn’t believe what he was hearing. “But...But I’ve...”

“Of course I am. We’re family, after all.” At the proclamation, Dream breaks. All the emotions he’d spent years containing finally broke through the dam. He tosses his mask off and covers his face with his arms, openly sobbing. The photo slips out of his fingers forgotten. “Jeez, you’re gonna make *me* cry at this rate.” She mumbles and awkwardly pats Dream’s shoulder. He smiles a bit. “By the way, did you *ever* wash that mask?”

Dream shakes his head. He doesn’t trust himself to speak without breaking down again.

“Ew. Leave it here. I’ll make you a new one.” He nods. Maybe that would be for the best. “Okay. So we’re doing this, yeah?” He nods again. “Alright. See you on the other side, Dream.” Before Dream could stop her, Drista slips free from his grip and steps backward. She spreads her arms out as she falls into the portal. Dream watches her disappear in a shower of teal and purple particles.

Scrubbing away his remaining tears, Dream steps up staring down into the portal, standing precariously on the edge. With a deep breath, Dream jumps in after Drista.

A mask and a photo are left behind.

Chapter End Notes

god when i started this fic i never planned to make it 3 chapters- i was just gonna have the 1 chapter and leave it at that but then i got the idea of showing dream's pov and then things just spiraled outta control and its done! i dont know if ill add more to this au and if i do id turn into a series, so if you guys want me to continue let me know! theres still a lot i came up with that i couldnt put in the fic as well. if theres any question you guys still have feel free to comment them!! ill answer them best i can

some extra notes to clear things up if people were confused:

-drista was in this au's version of spectator mode but she never learned how to take herself out of it

-i left it open ended because it felt weird tying everything up with the actual dream smp hasn't ended or gotten close to an end and i like open ends :)

-i actually kinda wanted to make ranboo a major character in this chapter but it felt weird bringing someone in during the last chapter so i just had the lil tidbit

-i do not support dsmp!dream and his manipulation and it felt weird giving him a "happy" ending like i originally planned so i gave him an end that can be interpreted in different ways to the reader

-fun fact! this was originally gonna be a wilbur only pov chapter but i wanted to show every angle of sides so i decided to change it up

thank you guys for all the sweet comments!!! they really mean the world to me and have helped push me forward to finish. i hope everyone has a happy new years!

if you like my work and want to see previews/my ideas and bad jokes i have a twitter! i rt a lot of sleepytwit posts as well

[Twitter](#)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!